PLAIN SENSE,

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

'Reaſon ſtill uſe, to reaſon ſtill attend.'

POPE.

VOL. I.

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72
MAY

PLAIN SENSE.

CHAP. I.

'Piange de 'quel, che gia ſia fortto ſervo
'Di due vaghi occhi, e d'unna bella treccia,
'Totto cui ſi naſcende un Cor protervo,
'Che poco pura abbia, con molto feccia.'

ARIOSTO.

MARIA VILLARS was born a beauty. Her firſt ſmile was enchantment, her firſt movement grace: Nor had fortune been leſs favorable to her than nature—ſhe and one ſon were the only offspring born to Lord Villars by his firſt wife: On his marriage, 20,000l. the fortune that his wife brought him, had been by marriage ſettlements allotted to younger children, and there having been no limitation,

as to number, the whole ſum became the property of Maria. Lady Villars died in a few months after the birth of her daughter; and many more had not elapſed before Lord Villars exchanged the ſober garb of affliction, for the gay trappings of a bridegroom.

On this ſecond marriage, Maria was placed under the care of a ſiſter of her father's, a woman, who to an unbounded love for diſſipation, joined ſo much natural good humour, as made her deſirous that all with whom ſhe had to do ſhould ſhare in pleaſures, which ſhe thought ſo neceſſary to happineſs. Although married ſhe had no children; ſhe had talked herſelf into the belief, that ſhe was miſerable from the want of them; Maria therefore became her paſſion;—the moſt unlimited indulgence ſoon taught her to know no rule for action but her own will. Naturally violent, craving, and vain, ſhe ſoon became tyrannical, ſelfiſh, and overbearing. Nature had beſtowed upon her a quickneſs of apprehenſion, which, had it been properly directed, might have aſſiſted her in procuring ſuch uſeful knowledge as would in time have formed her judgment, and corrected her temper; but this quickneſs being miſtaken by her aunt for wit, it became rather a ſubject of praiſe for itſelf than cultivated as a means by which to acquire things worthy of praiſe.

Of the many accompliſhments, therefore, that Maria made a parade of acquiring, ſhe knew no one tolerably, muſic and dancing excepted. She was born with an accurate ear and a ſweet voice, and ſhe ſo early felt the advantage to be derived from the cultivation of ſuch enchanting

enchanting talents, that ſhe had acquired a very competent knowledge in the ſcience of muſic, and, in the little leſs difficult one of dancing, ſhe excelled. In her earlieſt years ſhe had been her aunt's plaything; as time began more to unfold her charms, ſhe became her boaſt and her exhibition.

Where rank, youth, beauty, talents, and fortune, were united, it is not wonderful that the uſeful acquirements of the underſtanding were unſought, or that the unobtruſive virtues of the heart were forgotten. In the circle wherein Maria Villars moved, there was but one opinion, "that Miſs Villars was perfection." She heard it every hour of the day, ſhe ſaw it in the deference that was paid to her opinions, and in the eagerneſs that was manifeſted even to *prevent* her wiſhes; ſhe repeated it to herſelf continually, and there was certainly no article of her faith to which her mind yielded half ſo perfect an aſſent.

Amidſt the general admiration that followed her wherever ſhe appeared, there was not wanting, even from her earlieſt youth, ſeveral individuals, who, allured by her beauty, or induced by her fortune, ſeriouſly ſought her for a wife; but her aunt was in no haſte to induce her to fix her choice; ſhe thought no rank, however high, or fortune, however ſplendid, above what might be challenged by the merits of her niece: And Maria, (whoſe greateſt delight was in multiplying her conqueſts, and in the infliction of pain) encouraged and diſdained all her lovers alike.

She was now in her eighteenth year, when one night on her return from a ball, ſhe declared to her aunt in the moſt peremptory terms, that her choice was made, that ſhe was in love with Mr. Mordaunt, and that Mr. Mordaunt ſhe would marry. The ſhock of an earthquake could not have been more tremendous to the feelings of Mrs. Forteſcue, than was this declaration of her niece: She knew Mr. Mordaunt for a young man of faſhion and good family, elegant in his perſon, and inſinuating in his manners, but he was without rank, and almoſt without fortune; as to his underſtanding, or his moral character, ſhe had never heard either of them mentioned, nor would they have made any part of her inquiries: She attempted to remonſtrate; but ſhe ſoon found that ſhe had neither the power that authority beſtows, nor the influence that is derived from affection. Maria had taken her reſolution, and ſhe ſcrupled not to ſay, "that although ſhe ſhould be beſt pleaſed if her marriage were ſanctioned by her aunt's approbation, yet, the want of ſuch approbation ſhould not prevent it."

The fact was, that Mr. Mordaunt, from the firſt time in which he beheld Maria, had became violently and truly in love with her. There was ſomething in the humility and verity of his paſſion, that had been peculiarly pleaſing to her vanity; his addreſs and his perſon had charmed her; ſhe ſaw his attentions were ſought for by the moſt diſtinguiſhed of her companions; it became, therefore, a point of honour to attach him to herſelf: But, when ſhe learnt that he was the object of the tendereſt love to her

moſt

moſt intimate friend, ſhe was reſolved to make him her huſband.

Mrs. Forteſcue deſpairing of the effect of her own influence with her niece, ſaw no other means to prevent a marriage which ſhe ſo much diſapproved, except by the force of parental authority; ſhe applied to Lord Villars, repreſenting to him the entire deſtruction of thoſe ambitious hopes, the uncommon beauty and attractions of Maria had given birth to, if ſhe were thus permitted to diſpoſe of herſelf: But Lord Villars, however he might wiſh that the inclinations of his daughter had taken another bent, was too much engaged in the cares and intereſts that had ariſen from a ſecond marriage, to beſtow much thought or trouble on the affairs of a child, eſtranged from him from her birth, and whom he conſidered as being totally ſpoiled by the weak indulgence of her aunt; he therefore told his ſiſter, that ſhe muſt abide by the conſequences of her own miſconduct; that ten thouſand pounds was the whole of what he could ſpare to his daughter on her marriage, but that the reſt of the ſettlement would be her's at his death, and that ſhe muſt endeavour to make the beſt bargain ſhe could.

Mrs. Forteſcue thus finding that all oppoſition would be vain, no longer troubled herſelf to oppoſe what ſhe could not prevent. Mr. Mordaunt was made the happieſt of men, by being told Maria Villars was to be his wife; and Maria herſelf took the air of ſacrificing ambition and avarice at the ſhrine

of love. She became, in truth, during the time of the courtſhip, as much in love with Mr. Mordaunt, as ſhe could be with any man. As to Mr. Mordaunt, he was not more enchanted with her beauty, or captivated by the graces of her manner, than he was impreſſed with gratitude, for the preference ſhe gave him; he conſidered ſuch a preference as a proof of the moſt diſintereſted affection, and entertained not a doubt but that in the lovely miſtreſs he was about to poſſeſs, he ſhould find the good humoured companion, the affectionate friend, and the faithful wife; he knew not, nor would it have been in the power of an angel from heaven to have made him believe that Maria Villars was to be the bane of his happineſs, and the ſcourge of his children. Maria, it is true, had ſuffered herſelf, equally with Mr. Mordaunt, to be determined in her choice of a companion for life, by the charms of an exterior, and by motives that could have no influence on the happineſs of that life; but ſhe had not, like him, added, even in imagination, the qualities either of the head or heart; ſhe had not thought about them. The man who was in love with her, was, of courſe, at her diſpoſal; ſhe did not ſo far miſtruſt her charms, as to ſuſpect that this might not always be the caſe, and while ſhe could preſerve an unlimited power over the actions of Mr. Mordaunt, ſhe ſought for no other quality on which to ground happineſs; there was no one excellence of the head or the heart, nor all the poſſible excellencies of both united, that ſhe would not

not have exchanged for the ſingle virtue of unlimited compliance with her wiſhes: But Mr. Mordaunt was formed by nature to have beſtowed happineſs of a very different kind from that which Maria required—with perfectly good and clear ſenſe, of a calm and gentle mind, with kind affections, and the moſt diſintereſted diſpoſitions, had he met with a heart and temper congenial to his own, there was no degree of domeſtic felicity that he was not capable of giving and receiving.

It would have been Mr. Mordaunt's wiſh upon his marriage, to have withdrawn from ſcenes of diſſipation and expence, (at once ſo adverſe to his inclination) and ſo inimical to his fortune, to his paternal eſtate in Northumberland. But to this plan Mrs. Forteſcue and Maria were equally averſe, and Mr. Mordaunt eaſily found in the gaiety of youth, and the inveteracy of habit, a ſufficient excuſe for this oppoſition to his wiſhes;——he hoped time, and the cares of a mother, which he ſaw with pleaſure would ſoon belong to Maria, would produce diſpoſitions more ſuited to his own, and in the mean while he made his happineſs by contributing to her's. He was, however, ſomewhat more alarmed when he found, that even after the birth of a daughter, her rage for amuſement ſeemed greater than ever; and long before his tenderneſs thought ſhe ought to have quitted her houſe, he found her eager again to emerge into the world, to form new engagements, and to ſeek new pleaſures: She had abſolutely refuſed to ſuckle her child, and he had been made

to believe that her health was too delicate to admit of her performing ſuch an office; but when he ſaw it ſufficiently robuſt to encounter the vigils of balls and aſſemblies, and the harraſſing exertions of morning amuſements, he firſt uttered his ſurpriſe and then ventured to remonſtrate.

It was the firſt moment in which he had appeared to have a will diſtinct from that of Maria. The vehemence which ſhe betrayed upon this occaſion aſtoniſhed and alarmed him; but the veil was now fallen, and from this hour ſhe appeared in her natural form. The imperfections of temper in a wife, although ſufficient to deſtroy happineſs, are, however, ſeldom powerful enough to pluck from the breaſt of a tender hearted man a deep rooted love. Mr. Mordaunt was compelled to be miſerable, but he could not ceaſe to love. It was not ſo with Maria, ſhe had never loved ——ſhe never could love any one but herſelf: While Mr. Mordaunt contributed to her convenience, or her pleaſure, ſhe ſmiled upon him with a complacency that made him believe himſelf the happieſt of men; when he thwarted her moſt extravagant wiſhes, ſhe armed her brow with defiance, and his hours were paſſed in wrangling and ill humour.

For ſome of the firſt years of their marriage, the dread of interrupting thoſe moments of ſunſhine from which he drew his precarious and little enjoyed happineſs, made him give up, undiſputed, almoſt every point to his wife. Her habit of controul became by this means the more confirmed; and afterwards, when this

this reaſon ceaſed (for there were no longer moments of ſunſhine) the embarraſſment of his affairs, and the dread that all minds, not ſtrong, feel of probing the bottom of an evil, occaſioned him to go on in the ſame way. Thus, at the end of ten years, he found himſelf diſappointed in his hopes of happineſs, involved in debt, the father of three miſerable neglected girls, and the huſband of a decayed beauty, whoſe health had been ruined by diſſipation, and whoſe temper, not naturally good, had been irritated by the diſtreſſes of poverty: Her heart and her underſtanding offered no reſources in the hour of diſappointment, and her continual ſelf reproaches for having ſo fooliſhly thrown herſelf away, awakened Mr. Mordaunt to a wandering ſenſe, how the moſt beautiful features, or the moſt perfect form, could ever have been a veil ſufficiently thick, to have concealed from his obſervation the deformity of her temper, and the ſelfiſhneſs of her heart.

As to what was now to be done, there remained no option: Mrs. Forteſcue had ſo often relieved the diſtreſſes of her niece, that ſhe had no longer the power of doing ſo—— The ten thouſand pounds paid at her marriage, were diſſipated——of the ten that were to be received on the death of Lord Villars, the intereſt only could be of any uſe, as the principal was ſettled upon children. Creditors were numerous and preſſing; there was no alternative but a jail, or the family manſion in Northumberland.

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt, with a degree of reſolution which might have been the preventative ten years before, of the evils, for which it was now ſcarcely an alleviation, ſold all his property, in or near town, and packing up his wife, himſelf, their three daughters, and one woman ſervant, in the only carriage they had left, this ruined family began their journey into Northumberland.

Maria, although ſhe had nothing to oppoſe to a meaſure ſo neceſſary and unavoidable, yet had not fortitude enough to ſubmit to it without the bittereſt lamentations, and the deepeſt grief: She parted from Mrs. Forteſcue as if ſhe had been going into a Siberian exile, and Mrs. Forteſcue herſelf would, with leſs grief, have followed her to her grave, than thus have ſeen her, at eight and twenty, baniſhed from all that ſhe held valuable in life, and buried in the frightful glooms of a Northern ſolitude. But grief, however violent and tempeſtuous, brings no balm to irremediable evils. After ſome days of vehemence, complaints, and tears——after others of a ſullen ſilence and ill humoured diſcontent, Mrs. Mordaunt found herſelf, in ſpite of all her grief and reluctance, ſettled at Groby Manor, compelled to attend to the common affairs of life, and her influence confined to the circle of a ſmall country family, three hundred miles diſtant from London.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

'Yonder manſion,——
——'To the morning ſun
'Turns his warm aſpect——
——'On a hill
'Half way between the ſummit and a brook,
'That idly wanders at the foot, it ſtands,
'And looks into a valley, wood-beſpread,
'That winds along below.'

HURDIS.

GROBY MANOR was ſituate about thirty miles from the ſea coaſt, at the head of a narrow valley, the oppoſite ſides of which were formed by a variety of high and differently ſhaped hills, well wooded, with here and there a green meadow or a corn field interſperſed. Through the valley run a clear ſtream, and there were a variety of pleaſant and romantic walks on every ſide.

The houſe had, for many generations, been the reſidence of a reſpectable and well beloved family: It contained large and convenient rooms, and though the furniture were old, it was ſufficiently plentiful. The houſe was ſheltered from every cutting wind, and open only to a ſouthern expoſure; it was warm and comfortable, proviſions and coals were cheap

cheap and abundant, there was a good library, and the air, clear and wholeſome, gave colour to the cheek, and vigour to the limbs.

Here, then, were ſources enough of enjoyment, were the mind capable of reliſhing them; but Mrs. Mordaunt ſeemed reſolved that as ſhe was to be leſs happy than ſhe wiſhed to be, ſhe would be as miſerable as ſhe could. She paſſed her days in ſullen diſcontent and unavailing repining, refuſing all ſociety, and rendering thoſe who were obliged to approach her as miſerable as herſelf.

With Mr. Mordaunt it was otherwiſe.—— Having once broken the chains that tied him to a life he diſapproved, his natural temper began to manifeſt itſelf in beneficial effects to himſelf and all around him. He was delighted to be returned to the ſeat of his forefathers; joy ſprung in his heart at the ſight of the ſcenes of his infancy; he rejoiced to renew the ſocial connexions of his former neighbourhood, and to buſy himſelf in the cares and occupations of a country life. He ſaw, with a ſatisfaction, that tranquillized his ſleeping, and gladdened his waking hours, that ten years of prudent retirement would clear his eſtate. In theſe ten years he hoped to recompenſe to his daughters, the evil they had hitherto received from neglect and ill education; and he conſidered the end as being ſcarcely more deſirable than the means.

He endeavoured, by gentleneſs and the kindeſt affection, to ſoften the mind of Maria, and to open it to a capability of enjoyment:

He

He ſtill loved her, ſhe therefore eaſily perſuaded himſelf, that time and the eaſy undiſturbed life ſhe was henceforth to lead, might work this miracle; he was willing to lay all her faults on the miſtakes of her education, and the folly of her former life.

Here, my dear Maria, (would he ſometimes ſay) here it depends only upon ourſelves to be happy, and after the experience we have had of the inſufficiency of every other ſource for happineſs, ſhall we neglect the only pure one, and which is now in our power? He had not, indeed, the ſatisfaction to ſee ſhe was ſenſible either to his kindneſs, or his reaſoning, but he conſidered, that time only could overcome habits ſo deeply rooted as her's, and he was willing to wait patiently and good humouredly for its effects.

Twelve months were now elapſed ſince Mr. Mordaunt's removal into the country, and Maria began to be ſomewhat more reconciled to her ſituation. She was not the leſs reconciled from obſerving the effect that the change in her manner of living had upon her beauty:—The regularity of her life, and the purity of the air, had fluſhed her faded cheek with health, and had reſtored the luſtre to her eye, her limbs had recovered their roundneſs, and her complexion its tranſparency; ſhe heard the ruſtic praiſes of the peaſants whenever ſhe walked out, and her own maid had not ſo far forgotten her old trade, as not carefully to repeat, ſometimes with, and ſometimes without exaggeration, the commendations

mendations that were retailed by ſervants from the dining parlours of their maſters.

She was conſcious of the diſguſt ſhe had given to all their neighbours on her firſt coming into the country, ſhe had then ſcarce thought it worth her while to remember the exiſtence of beings whom ſhe conſidered as little above the brute creation, but to the pleaſure of admiration it was not poſſible, while ſhe continued to breathe, that ſhe ſhould long be inſenſible. She endeavoured to apologize for her former conduct, by imputing it to ill health, and ſhe gave an appearance of truth to her apology, by now ſhewing a willingneſs to enter into ſociety, and to partake of ſuch pleaſures as the country afforded.

Her inſinuating manners, the ſuperiority of her breeding, and her uncommon beauty, adorned as it now was by graciouſneſs, ſoon made her the idol, or the envy, of all who approached her. Mr. Mordaunt could not but be pleaſed with this improvement in his wife's temper, but he ſoon found it was confined wholly to thoſe hours when ſhe was engaged with company, either from home, or in her own houſe; he ſaw, with the moſt ſenſible mortification, that this amendment, however, aroſe only from the gratification of her vanity, to him ſhe was always alike cold and inſenſible, always equally neglectful of her children, and intolerable to her domeſtics: Her grumblings and diſcontent when they were alone, were rather increaſed than abated, ſhe ſullenly refuſed to take pleaſure in any of his plans or amuſements, coldly withdrew her attention

attention when he wiſhed to converſe, complained that his eagerneſs in his country purſuits diſtracted her nerves, and would ſhut herſelf up in her room for a day together, altering an old bonnet, or new modelling ſome of the ancient furniture.

Such a conduct, in ſpite of himſelf, gave Mr. Mordaunt a bad opinion of her heart, and gradually wore away all attachment or partiality but that which a confirmed habit, and the intimacy of their connexion, preſerved in ſpite of his reaſon and his feelings.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

'She bore a mind that envy could not but call fair.'

SHAKESPEARE.

HAD Maria been more amiable, they might now have been happy. They were now ſettled with a ſmall but comfortable eſtabliſhment, upon an equal footing with their neighbours, ſufficiently buſied to feel no want of employment, and ſufficiently idle to be in no danger of fatigue; they had no particular cares to moleſt them, they enjoyed health and a competency, and if they had nothing much to hope they had alſo nothing much to fear.

But, in a life where happineſs muſt ariſe alone from a diſcharge of duty, Maria found no charms; ſhe was ſenſible only to wearineſs. As ſome relief from this eternal ſameneſs, ſhe was not diſpleaſed to find herſelf with child. To give herſelf more conſequence, and the circumſtance more intereſt, ſhe took it into her head to imagine that ſhe longed paſſionately for a boy. By talking perpetually on the ſubject, and expatiating on the maternal raptures ſhe was about to feel,

ſeel, and the maternal cares in which ſhe was henceforth to be engaged, ſhe had converted what was at firſt merely a whim, into a ſerious paſſion; ſhe counted the months, the weeks as they paſſed; every day might now compleat her wiſhes, the hour came, and—ſhe was delivered of a daughter!

From the moment ſhe beheld her, the poor child's deſtiny, as far as it depended upon the affection of its mother, was decided. 'It was hideous, ſhe ſaw every bad paſſion in its contenance, it looked like an owl, like an ape, like aunt Nelly.'—Invective could go no farther.

This aunt Nelly the *ne plus ultra* of abhorrence, had been the ſiſter of Mr. Mordaunt: Her breaſt was the manſion of every female virtue; ſhe had been the being in the world, next to Maria, that Mr. Mordaunt had moſt fondly loved; being by many years his ſenior, ſhe had been the nurſe of his childhood, the gentle monitor of his youthful days, the warm and ſteady friend of his manly years. On his marriage he had eagerly ſent for her to town, that ſhe might know and be known to one, whom he thought her only ſuperior. He told his Maria, 'that in the friendſhip of his ſiſter ſhe would find all the advantage of ſuperior wiſdom and perfect goodneſs; he did not bid her love her, he knew it was impoſſible ſhe ſhould do otherwiſe; and as to his ſiſter, ſhe would doat upon Maria as her child.'

All this might have been, and would have been, had Maria been the perſon Mr. Mordaunt

daunt believed her to be. But, with her ſarcaſtic ſpirit, and ſelf conſequence, virtue and wiſdom, in the form of a plain, though intelligent looking woman of five and forty, were likely only to produce contempt and ſatire—She quarrelled with every feature in her face in the firſt half hour of their acquaintance, ridiculed her to her companions, ſcoffed at her to her woman, and in the conſtrained civility that ſhe thought proper to ſhew her before Mr. Mordaunt, evinced to a woman of Miſs Mordaunt's penetration, the averſion ſhe had taken to her. Nor was it leſs difficult to diſcover the miſtake that Mr. Mordaunt had made in his choice; and Maria's averſion to her ſiſter-in-law was increaſed by a conſciouſneſs that it could not be hid from her.

This averſion, however, might have worn off, could Mrs. Mordaunt have found real cauſe for the contempt ſhe expreſſed towards Miſs Mordaunt; but ſhe ſoon was compelled to feel for this hated ſiſter, a reſpect, which her virtue inſpired, and a dread which her underſtanding impoſed. This reſpect, this dread converted diſlike into hatred: She was ſenſible her conduct would juſtify animadverſion, and ſhe had no doubt but ſhe received it from Miſs Mordaunt—ſhe looked upon her as a ſpy, and hated her accordingly.

During Mr. Mordaunt's reſidence in London, Miſs Mordaunt had viſited town from time to time, for the purpoſe of ſeeing her brother; ſhe had very early diſcovered that he was unhappy, and although he did not complain,

complain, she perceived her company was a relief to him, she therefore never suffered twelve months to pass without her spending a few weeks in lodgings in town, contributing, by this means, all in her power toward his happiness, and indulging herself in the pleasure she received from the company of his children; she endeavoured all she could to counteract the evil they imbibed at home, and she sought, by every method, to inspire them with love towards herself—in this latter particular, she so compleatly succeeded, that the poor girls loved nothing half so well as aunt Nelly.

All these circumstances confirmed Maria's hatred, and almost the only act of maternity she ever exercised was, the giving her eldest girl a whipping, on her saying, as her mother was putting on her morning bonnet, 'Now mamma looks like aunt Nelly.'

Two years before Mr. Mordaunt's removal into the country, Miss Mordaunt had been seized with a disorder, which prevented her stirring from home, and having languished under very painful circumstances for eighteen months, she had at length been released from, and rewarded for her sufferings. Her death had been a severe affliction to Mr. Mordaunt, and he cherished her memory with the highest degree of tenderness and veneration. It was not therefore with Mr. Mordaunt that the supposed likeness of his new born child to aunt Nelly, was likely to operate to her disadvantage; nor was the unreasonable aversion that Mrs. Mordaunt had taken

taken to the poor infant, one whit more prejudicial to her with her father; for when he beheld the inveteracy with which his wife perſiſted in her deteſtation to ſo excellent a creature as his ſiſter had been, and when he compared the parade ſhe now made of her feelings, as a mother, with the abſolute neglect ſhe had hitherto ſhewn to her offspring, all partiality was for the moment at an end, and he viewed her with a degree of diſapprobation, that ſeemed to prohibit the poſſibility of its ever again being renewed.

There was one point, however, even on this ſubject, in which Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt agreed; this was, in giving the name of Ellen to the poor little girl: Maria choſe it that ſhe might gratify her ſpite in calling the child aunt Nelly, and Mr. Mordaunt was fond of perpetuating a name that had belonged to a ſiſter, whoſe memory (perhaps by comparing her character with that of his wife) grew every day dearer to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

'Coléi,
'Non ſo ſe doorá dir matrigna O madre
'Ma ſe pur madre, a lei poco piu piu,
'Che Medea ai figli e progne ſtata ſia.'

ARIOSTO.

IT was not merely in the airy nothing of a name that Mrs. Mordaunt exerciſed her diſlike to her unhappy infant: The inextinguiſhable deſire that ſhe had of being ever the object of attention and obſervation, made her ſeek for means to perpetuate her conſequence, when youth and beauty (however diſtant ſhe might at preſent conſider that period) ſhould be no more.

To be the principal object where-ever ſhe appeared, had been the firſt wiſh to which ſhe had been conſcious, and it was likely to be the laſt of which ſhe would be ſenſible. The faſhionable furor for education preſented her the means ſhe ſought——ſhe could no longer eclipſe rival beauties at a ball, ſhe could no longer ſtrike the fangs of envy into a heart ſimilar to her own, by the ſuperior elegance of her head dreſs, or the ſplendor of her equipage; all her triumphs were confined within the circle of a ſmall neighbourhood, far remote from the ſcene of all her former

former diſtinctions, and where the inquiries of the curious were more directed to the domeſtic œconomy of their neighbours, than to the form of their clothes, or the faſhion of their carriages. To this neighbourhood ſhe reſolved to be known as the moſt educating mother in it. Her elder daughters were too old, and too much under the wiſer care of their father, to be proper objects on which to diſplay her abilities in this new road to diſtinction, but the new born infant was her undiſputed property, and ſhe reſolved to pour all the terrors of education on poor Ellen's head.

In this deſign, ſo wiſely and ſo benevolently formed, ſhe ſucceeded ſo perfectly, that at the early age of twelve months, when other children know their mothers only as their ſureſt ſource of indulgence, Maria was become ſo compleatly an object of terror to her child, that ſhe ſcarce looked upon her without trembling, or appeared before her without tears: It ſeemed too, as if every circumſtance was to conſpire to render the infancy of Ellen wretched. In leſs than fifteen months after her birth, the eagerly deſired boy was born, and, as if this unnatural mother poſſeſſed but a certain degree of affection, the little tenderneſs that ſhe had hitherto manifeſted towards Ellen, was all withdrawn, to be added to that which ſhe profuſely laviſhed on the boy; beſides which, Ellen was always wrong in every thing ſhe did, or every thing ſhe did not do for her brother. If ſhe careſſed him, ſhe would ſmother the child—If ſhe ſtood aloof

aloof ſhe was a little inſenſible, without affections, and then ſhe had a ſlap or a puſh, or her play things were taken from her, or ſhe was ſometimes whipped, ſhe did not know for why, or for what.

The age of teaching now came on, and Mrs. Mordaunt was reſolved to teach; but the truth was, that ſhe had never learnt; her own ideas of what ſhe meant to convey were too indiſtinct, to enable her to communicate them to another; her method was unintelligible, and her impatience extreme. Ellen could learn nothing—it was ſtupidity—it was obſtinacy—ſhe had always foretold that ſhe had the worſt diſpoſitions of human nature—puniſhment followed puniſhment, 'till by a ſucceſſion of ſuch teaching and ſuch correction, that very ſtupidity and obſtinacy were nearly produced which they were deſigned to correct.

Mr. Mordaunt was not an inattentive ſpectator of all this, but he was far from underſtanding the real truth of the caſe. The early terror that had been impreſſed on the mind of Ellen had made her appear, even to Mr. Mordaunt, as a child of a ſlow capacity, and ſomewhat of a ſullen diſpoſition; he was often witneſs to what were repreſented to him as fits of obſtinacy, and ſometimes to moments of violence; he feared Ellen might reſemble her mother, and thought a little correction might be neceſſary; with the degree and frequency of the puniſhment he was wholly unacquainted, and as it is eaſy to put a child in the wrong, Mrs. Mordaunt took care that Ellen ſhould always appear ſo

to her father. But however Mr. Mordaunt might, for a certain time, have been perſuaded, that his wife's mode of treating his daughter was ſalutary, or neceſſary, experience convinced him it was inefficacious. At ſix years old Ellen could ſcarcely read, and he obſerved, with inexpreſſible pain, a ſullen indifference to all inſtruction or reproof pervading her mind.

Maria had never been her huſband's friend, for many years ſhe had ceaſed to be his confidant, and the ingenuous mind of Mr. Mordaunt had ſuffered the ſevereſt mortification when he had found it neceſſary to ſacrifice the pleaſure of communication to the dictates of prudence. Since his reſidence in Northumberland he had found, however, both a friend and a confidant, to whom he opened his heart whenever he was oppreſſed with diſſatisfaction, or perplexed with doubt. This friend and this confidant was the clergyman of the pariſh, whoſe benevolence had never failed to ſooth his ſorrows, or his judgment to enlighten his underſtanding.

To Mr. Thornton he revealed the fears and grief that the character of Ellen excited in his breaſt.

"Give me leave to invite my wife to make one of our party," ſaid Mr. Thornton, "I am miſtaken if ſhe will not give you comfort.

Mrs. Thornton was only in the next room, ſhe obeyed her huſband's ſummons, ſhe ſa down, and heard Mr. Mordaunt's diſtreſs.

"Your child, my dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, "is neither ſtupid nor ill diſpoſed; wrong methods

thods have been taken with her—terror has overwhelmed the powers of her mind, and deadened her affection. Convince her ſhe is beloved, and ſhe will be and do every thing you can deſire."

"How is it poſſible, madam," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "that you ſhould have formed ſo contrary, and ſo much more favorable opinion of Ellen, than I, with all my partiality, have been able to entertain?"

"She loves me, Sir," returned Mrs. Thornton, "and ſhe loves me, becauſe ſhe believes I love her: If ſhe can love one perſon, ſhe can love another. She is willing to learn of me; and only the laſt time I was with her, I taught her a leſſon in ten minutes, that ſhe told me ſhe had been the three preceding days in vain attempting to learn.——Do you aſk other proofs?"

"No," cried Mr. Mordaunt, "but I have farther favors to aſk of you. You muſt take this poor child under your care, my dear Mrs. Thornton; you muſt take her and make her all you ſay ſhe is capable of being made."

After a little more converſation, all the particulars of this plan were ſettled.

Mrs. Thornton had long ſeen Ellen's ſufferings with pity, and was happy to contribute all in her power to put an end to them. Mrs. Mordaunt, convinced that Ellen would do no credit to her mode of education, and tired of the trouble ſhe gave her, eaſily conſented to part with her.

The parſonage, to which Ellen was now removed, was ſcarcely half a mile diſtant from

Groby Manor, and it was ſituate at the other end of the valley. So near a neighbourhood enabled Mr. Mordaunt to ſee his daughter every day, and he ſaw her every day with increaſed ſatisfaction: Her pallid cheks, hitherto robbed of their colour, by the continual waſhing of tears, began to be tinged with a faint red; her ſullen eye, formerly fixed gloomily on the ground, was often now raiſed timidly to the perſon who ſpoke to her, and ſometimes caſt forth beams of intelligence and gaiety; if ſhe did not yet run to meet her father when he approached her, ſhe ventured to preſs the hand that held her's, and ſometimes would ſhe reſt her head upon his ſhoulder, and he could perceive, as ſhe raiſed it, a tear tremble in her eye, which he could attribute only to the tenderneſs of her heart, reſponſible to its careſſes. Mr. Mordaunt left no method untried to ſecure her affections, and every day now gave him a more perfect aſſurance that he was not unſucceſsful.

Ellen had been about ſix months in her new ſituation, when the illneſs of Lord Villars called Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt into Hampſhire, his indiſpoſition was long, and terminated in his death.

Mrs. Mordaunt, very well pleaſed to find herſelf once again in her old world, caught at every poſſible reaſon for prolonging her ſtay: Her brother, now Lord Villars, had been married ſome years, ſhe had ſeen little of him during this period; he preſſed her ſo much to continue in Hampſhire the remainder

der of the ſummer, that Mr. Mordaunt conſented ſhe ſhould do ſo; but he conſented upon condition that their three elder daughters ſhould join them there; he thought it deſirable to have them known to their neareſt connexions, and he was willing to give them ſuch aſſiſtances in ſome exterior accompliſhments, as the diſtant ſituation of Northumberland had not hitherto allowed them. The boy had never been ſeparated from his mother.

Mr. Mordaunt's condition was joyfully accepted:- The ſummer paſſed pleaſantly with them all, and when the time for repairing to London approached, Mrs. Forteſcue (now a widow) ſo vehemently urged the melancholy of returning into Northumberland at that ſeaſon, and ſo kindly offered the whole family apartments in her houſe, that Mr. Mordaunt again conſented to prolong his abſence from home.

The family had not been ſettled more than a month in town, when Mrs. Forteſcue was ſeized with a fever, of which ſhe died in about a fortnight: On her death it was found ſhe had bequeathed to Mrs. Mordaunt all ſhe had in her power to diſpoſe of. This all conſiſted in a ſmall country manſion, with an eſtate of about 200l. a year about it, it was ſituated within ten miles of Lord Villars's houſe, in the country, and was furniſhed and fitted up with all the elegance of modern taſte.

Whatever tears Mrs. Mordaunt might ſhed for the loſs of a partial, though miſtaken, friend; for one, who had not only been her ſteady advocate through life, but who had

proved her benefactreſs at her death, were ſoon dried up by the thoughts of the independence that friend had ſecured to her, and ſtill more by reflections on the place where the property which gave her that independence was ſituated. She immediately declared her intentions of going to Hadley Lodge directly upon leaving town; but ſhe alſo proteſted, that ſhe meant not to leave London 'till the middle of June. The houſe ſhe was at preſent in was to continue her's for ſix months, and ſhe therefore ſaw no reaſon why the event of Mrs. Forteſcue's death ſhould abridge the ſcheme of pleaſure that ſhe had laid down for theenſuing ſpring.

Mr. Mordaunt felt it harſh to oppoſe any of theſe reſolutions, ſince they were not (in conſequence of their new acquiſitions) liable to the cenſure of imprudence in a pecuniary light: He therefore acquieſced, reſerving however to himſelf the power of viſiting Ellen and Northumberland; and this he propoſed to do when Mrs. Mordaunt and her family removed to Hadley Lodge.

In the execution of this plan he was, however, prevented. The death of a diſtant relation, who had for many years reſided in the Weſt Indies, made it neceſſary he ſhould himſelf croſs the Atlantic; property of ſome value had devolved to him, but the ſucceſſion of it was diſputed, and it was attended with ſome circumſtances that made it neceſſary, if he meant to proſecute his claim to it, to viſit the Iſland where it lay.

He

He would willingly have perſuaded Mrs. Mordaunt to have returned into Northumberland, there to have remained during his abſence; but to perſuade her was impoſſible, and to compel her to a meaſure ſo diſagreeable to herſelf, on the eve of a ſeparation that might be for a conſiderable length of time, was what the ſoftneſs of Mr. Mordaunt's feelings would not permit; it was therefore agreed that ſhe ſhould reſide at her own houſe while he was abſent, and he flattered himſelf that the neighbourhood of her brother might be ſome reſtraint upon her indiſcretion, and afford protection and counſel to his girls, if any circumſtance ſhould ariſe, during his abſence, in which they wanted either.

The time was ſhort in which he was to arrange all this; he recommended his family to Lord Villars, and ſailed for Jamaica.

By unforeſeen circumſtances and unavoidable delays, his abſence was prolonged to the beginning of the fifth year, and he returned ſomething poorer than he ſat out.

Immediately on his arrival in England Mr. Mordaunt haſtened to Hadley Lodge, but no comfort awaited him there—He found his eldeſt daughter married to a man of libertine character and diſſipated fortune, whoſe recommendation in the eyes of Mrs. Mordaunt had been his faſhionable manners, and his connexions with people of rank.

The boy, now ten years old, had continued, in ſpite of Mrs. Mordaunt's repeated injunctions to the contrary, in his mother's houſe,

where he had remained ignorant of every thing he ought to have learnt, and became acquainted with almoſt every thing he ought not to have known.

Mrs. Mordaunt herſelf was embarraſſed with debts, and of the independence, of which ſhe had made ſo ill a uſe, but little remained.

Mr. Mordaunt could ſcarcely forbear reproaching Lord Villars for the little attention he appeared to have given to his ſiſter and her children; but when he conſidered that he had himſelf the cares of a large family upon him, and a numerous train of half brothers and ſiſters, whoſe intereſt he was compelled to attend to, and reflected upon his character, in which ſelfiſhneſs was the predominant feature, he thought it beſt to forbear reproaches, which would now be made in vain, and which might tend to interrupt the friendly intercourſe there had hitherto ſubſiſted between himſelf and Lord Villars. In reproaches to himſelf, however, he was not ſparing, he felt too bitterly, the conſequences of his ill choice in a wife, not to call him ſeverely to an account for having ſuffered his eyes to miſlead his judgment.

Northumberland was again the reſource, and as Mrs. Mordaunt had now no power to remain in Hampſhire without the permiſſion of her huſband, ſhe knew it was in vain to oppoſe her wiſhes to his, ſhe therefore prepared, however reluctantly, for her departure but the delays which ſhe artfully threw in

in the way, having exhausted Mr. Mordaunt's patience, he left her to follow him at her leisure, and set out for Northumberland, accompanied only by the second son of Lord Villars, a youth of fifteen.

CHAP. V.

'May this great truth by all be underſtood,
'That all the pious duties which we owe,
'The ſeeds of every virtue here below,
'From diſcipline alone and early culture grow.'

WEST.

AS Mr. Mordaunt approached Groby-Manor, his impatience to behold the effects that more than five years muſt have wrought in Ellen, became extreme.

He was ſome times willing to hope, that having been removed from Mrs. Mordaunt's baneful influence, ſhe might compenſate to him for all the other domeſtic diſappointments that influence had produced; at others, the remembrance of thoſe faults which he had been accuſtomed to call natural to her diſpoſition, recurred to his mind, and overclouded it with the diſpiriting fear that no difference of treatment could have been powerful enough to correct them; yet Mrs. Thornton, though ſhe had ſaid nothing of her mental abilities, had ſpoken much of her docility. If I find her, ſaid Mr. Mordaunt to himſelf, gentle and affectionate, I will compound for a moderate capacity, and give up willingly all pretenſions to talents or accompliſhments.

Theſe

Theſe thoughts occupied him ſo much, that not all the comicality and ſprightly underſtanding of his companion could always awake him from his reverie, and Henry, who had as much feeling as gaiety, impoſed ſilence upon himſelf, that he might not prove troubleſome to his uncle.

Mr. Mordaunt reſted not a moment at Groby Manor, but with a long ſtep, and haſty movement, that made Henry laugh, proceeded down the valley to the parſonage.

As he approached the houſe he heard the ſound of a fiddle, and immediately after ſaw aſſembled on the green before the door, ten or twelve girls of different ages, who were dancing gaily to the muſic. Mr. Mordaunt ſtopped ſhort—he ſought if poſſible, to diſcover Ellen before ſhe was pointed out to him; and Henry ruſhed forward that he might join in the amuſement.

"Might that be her," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "might that ſprightly, good-humoured looking blooming girl be her, my wiſhes would be more than anſwered."

His wiſhes were more than anſwered—It was Ellen herſelf. The muſic ceaſed, the whole group was in confuſion, and the next moment Ellen, with an emotion that charmed him, was in the arms of her father.

"My dear child, my beloved Ellen, can I ever part with you again?"

"Yes, yes, this very moment, my dear uncle," cried Henry, "what am I not to have a dozen kiſſes at leaſt of my couſin?"

"And

"And are you my couſin, *too?*" ſaid Ellen, with one arm round her father's neck, and the other hand held out to Henry, "O, I did not know I was ever to have been ſo happy!"

The pathos of the ſcene was now over, but the delight remained, and Henry having taken ſomething more than his dozen kiſſes, ran away with Ellen to join her companions, and recommence the dance.

"You never told me," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt to Mr. Thornton, "of the good-humour and intelligence that beams in Ellen's countenance, nor of the lightneſs of her movements, the delicacy of her limbs, and the eaſe of her ſhape."

"Ellen is not a beauty," ſaid Mrs. Thornton, ſmiling.

"She is in her father's eyes," returned Mr. Mordaunt, "and will be ſo in thoſe of her lover."

"But you do not aſk what I have attempted to teach her; you do not inquire whether ſhe was capable of learning.

"I am almoſt indifferent what ſhe has learnt; with the diſpoſitions that I ſee ſhe poſſeſſes, ſhe will gratify my fondeſt wiſhes."

"But Ellen has not only diſpoſitions," ſaid Mr. Thornton, "ſhe has powers—ſhe is an excellent arithmetician, ſhe is a good geographer, ſhe is miſtreſs of all the rules of drawing, ſhe writes and ſpeaks French well, and has a very competent knowledge of Latin."

"To

"To which let me add," ſaid Mrs. Thornton, "that ſhe is miſtreſs of her needle, underſtands muſic tolerably, plays at cheſs, and dances, walks, and plays at ſhuttlecock to admiration."

"Impoſſible!" ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "you flatter me."

"Nothing can be more true, and yet Ellen is no prodigy; ſhe is what every girl of common ſenſe and common application may be at her age."

"But how did you conquer her obſtinacy, how did you ſubdue her violence?"

"I neither found her obſtinate nor violent. I did not propoſe to her to do any thing but what ſhe ſaw my own daughter, ſomething younger than herſelf do. Each day has its allotted buſineſs, and its allotted pleaſure. The ſloweſt capacity could comprehend, that the more hours were conſumed in buſineſs, the fewer there would be for pleaſure. It is only neceſſary to lay down the premiſes *and to abide by them*, the concluſion every child can draw for itſelf. If that concluſion is as infallible as it is unpleaſant, in a little time it will be carefully avoided. To the reaſon of its inſtructors a child will not perhaps readily ſubmit, it is againſt reaſon that it ſhould; but to the reaſon of facts children will always yield, provided it is made clear to them."

"Can it really be ſo eaſy to give the beſt poſſible education to a child?"

"I do not ſay that mine is the beſt poſſible education, nor is it ſo eaſy as it appears; to guard againſt the faults of the child is not half the

the buſineſs; the weakneſs of the tutor is much more inimical to the ſucceſs of his efforts—to be unyielding in matters (ſimply conſidered) of little import; to bear a cold countenance with a warm heart, to be inſenſible to the blandiſhments of childhood, where the good of the future man requires it, are not eaſy taſks to a feeling and affectionate mind, and no other is fitted for the taſk of education. Then will not the tutor have to combat with his own indolence, his own unevenneſs of diſpoſition, his caprice and his partialities? No, the taſk of education is not eaſy, but it is the greateſt in which man or woman can be engaged, and ought therefore to be attended to by all who undertake it, with every energy of the mind. What I have chiefly wiſhed to avoid was the doing too much not to do miſchief, and to let the cauſes that produce good have their full operation, are too material points. I was aware that the greateſt difficulty in this important matter aroſe from the weakneſſes of the inſtructors, and the indiſcreet interference of others. Mr. Thornton and I are abſolute here, and as perfectly ſteady, though ſometimes at the expence of a heart ach. Hence Ellen and Mary have learnt to conſider our laws as immutable as the decrees of fate, and to accommodate themſelves to them, as they would do to any phyſical neceſſity. Conſtant application has made the taſk of learning eaſy, and where ſomething new, however little, is acquired every day, the ſum total at the end of five years will be ſurpriſing."

"But

"But do you allow nothing to natural diſpoſition, and to the natural powers of the mind?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal: And here, I acknowledge that Ellen has met my cares more than half way; ſhe has a very good but not an uncommon capacity; her quickneſs of apprehenſion, however, is ſomething more than common; ſhe has a warm heart and a generous mind—I have been able to move her with the touch of a finger, had ſhe had duller feelings, I muſt have put my whole ſtrength to her."

"Your method of teaching ſeems not only calculated to produce the immediate end, that of communicating the thing to be taught, but alſo to give an anticipated experience of life. Will thoſe not be learnt by it, that yielding to the neceſſity of things which is the beſt ſecret for happineſs, and which enables us to repreſs uſeleſs repinings, and when we cannot be happy one way to be happy another?"

"It is what I hope from it, and without ſome ſuch end all the teachings in the world are only calculated to deſtroy the pleaſures of childhood, without having a tendency to pomote the virtue or the happineſs of the man. I know not what may be Ellen's deſtiny, but I think I can dare to foretell, that if her preſent habits are allowed to ſtrengthen, and her preſent principles to take root, ſhe will never, in any circumſtance, be the victim of ungoverned fancy, or the martyr to a ſelfiſh ſenſibility."

"But

"But is there not ſome danger in thus guarding her from a too great influence of the feelings, that ſhe ſhould become leſs amiable by the want of them?"

"I do not guard her from feeling, I guard her from ſelfiſhneſs; for others ſhe will feel acutely, for herſelf moderately; and where ſelf is out of the queſtion, there is no fear but that reaſon will always be near enough to ward off any danger, from too lively a ſenſibility."

"What is the leading feature of her mind? What is it that ſhe is extremely?"——

"Ellen knows no extremes."

"Except," interrupted Mr. Thornton, "the extreme of good-humour."

"Were I to have made the exception," ſaid Mrs. Thornton, "it would have been that of diſintereſtedneſs: But let us recollect that we are ſpeaking of a girl of twelve years old, ſhe is yet really nothing; all the intimations that ſhe gives of character, are favorable; but, alas! how ſix years of weak indulgence, or cold neglect, may make the woman of eighteen, differ from the girl of twelve."

She has neither the one or the other to fear," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt warmly, "if you will continue your cares."

"If I will!——

"My obligations," interrupted Mr. Mordaunt, "will then be ſuch as can never be diſcharged. And—"

"Talk not of obligations," ſaid Mr. Thornton, "be aſſured they are reciprocal, and if you truſt your Ellen with us another

ſix

ſix years, they will all be on our ſide; hitherto ſhe has only acquired the means of ſelf improvement, from this time every day will add ſomething to her real improvement of the mind, and the formation of the heart: And do you not think that thoſe who are to accompany the traveller in ſo flowery a way, will be more than repaid for the fatigue of the journey?"

The converſation was here interrupted by the breaking up of the ball, and Ellen ſideling towards her father, found herſelf a ſeat upon half his chair.

It is not to be doubted that from this evening Mr. Mordaunt ſpent many of his hours at the parſonage—Henry ſpent ſtill more—With Ellen he ſtudied, and with Ellen he idled; ſhe was the better ſcholar of the two, and would laugh at the careleſs manner in which he had been taught, would ſcoff at his want of application, and pique him to greater exertion by her ridicule. When books gave way to ſports, they walked, danced, or played at ſhuttlecock together, or Henry would aſſiſt Ellen and Mary in the labours of their garden, or they would compel him to liſten to ſome of their botanical diſcuſſions, Botany being a new ſtudy which Mr. Thornton had juſt given them. But as to cheſs, which equally excluded converſation and locomotion, Henry had never patience to hear it mentioned; for muſic he had little more toleration, except Ellen would ſing a ballad or play a country dance.

Six

Six weeks were thus paſſed away, and Mrs. Mordaunt had not yet ſulfilled her promiſe of following her huſband, he, therefore, thought it moſt prudent to return into Hampſhire, and not to quit it 'till he brought her away with him. Henry's vacation was more than expired, he muſt depart with his uncle, and Ellen declared, with as much naïveté as truth, that ſhe knew not which ſhe was moſt ſorry to part with—She bade them farewell with a degree of pain ſhe never before remembered to have felt. But ſhe had no leiſure for artificial grief, it was rather the recollections that were forced upon her, than any ſhe indulged in, that ſaddened for ſome days after their departure both her leſſons and her amuſements; but a much more ſerious grief awaited her.

CHAP. VI.

"Oh, mother!——yet no mother!——"

SAVAGE.

ELLEN retained only an indiſtinct idea of the ſeverity and ill will of her mother towards her during her infancy, all remembrance of it had been, by the cares of Mrs. Thornton, as much obliterated as poſſible: Thus, though ſhe did not look forward to the arrival of Mrs. Mordaunt with the ſame delight and deſire that ſhe had felt when ſhe expected her father, ſhe nevertheleſs thought of it with pleaſure, and the expectation of ſeeing her ſiſters, filled her with hopes ſtill more ſatisfactory to her feelings.

The firſt evening ſpent in their company repreſſed this pleaſure and chilled her hopes.

The immediate impulſe on the ſight of her mother had been to fly into her arms, but ſhe had ſtopped ſhort, checked by the frigidity of her air, and the ſcowling diſcontent of her brow; ſhe waited for invitation, but ſhe received it not, and ſhe ſtood ſilent and depreſſed with her eyes caſt upon the ground, unconſcious what could have been her fault, yet feeling that ſhe muſt have committed one.

"Maria,"

Maria," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "Ellen longs to embrace you."

"There, child," ſaid Maria, coldly kiſſing her forehead, "I hope you are grown good, but you uſed to be the naughtieſt little brat I was ever acquainted with; many are the twigs of birch I have worn out in your ſervice."

Tears ſtarted into poor Ellen's eyes, ſhe had nothing to ſay, nor did ſhe know clearly at that moment what ſhe thought; but ſhe felt that ſhe wiſhed herſef away.

Her ſiſters had no ill will towards her, but ſhe was not an object of any intereſt in their eyes; vitiated by their mother's precepts and example, they conſidered the having quitted the South of England, as having quitted every thing that was deſirable in life, as the forfeiture of all their hopes of eſtabliſhment in the world, and, indeed, as the conſummation of misfortune. Their journey, therefore, had been ſpent in tears and regret. Groby Manor appeared to them as a priſon, in which, for the future, their only happineſs muſt ariſe from enumerating delights that were gone for ever, and in talking of perſons who were to be ſeen no more: To all of which Ellen could ſpeak they were perfectly indifferent; they were too indolent to enter into her exerciſes, and too ignorant to care about her ſtudies.

Ellen ſenſibly felt her diſappointment, a diſappointment that every future day confirmed.

Her mother added ill humour and diſapprobation to her coldneſs, and though it was no longer in her power to puniſh, or to controul

troul her, it was more than ſufficiently ſo to mortify and to thwart her. There was no opportunity that occurred of doing either, that ſhe ever ſuffered to eſcape; her diſlike to Ellen was, indeed, little, if at all, ſhort of hatred: She could not conceal from herſelf how falſe had been the character which in her early years ſhe had ſought to ſtamp her with; her underſtanding and temper, however, now appeared both to be indubitably excellent, and Mrs. Mordaunt was fully aware of the concluſion that muſt be drawn by every body, that if ſuch ſoil had not from the firſt produced fruit, it muſt have been wholly owing to the unſkilfulneſs of the cultivator, ſhe therefore conſidered Ellen's merits and acquirements, as reproaches to herſelf, and as a moſt ſevere mortification to her vanity; and as ſhe could not, with all her depreciation of them, leſſen their real value; ſhe hated Ellen as the cauſe of her daily and hourly mortification.

It was more by the ſelf indulgence of railing at Ellen, than from any fixed deſign, that Mrs. Mordaunt communicated her prejudices to the hearts of her daughters; theſe prejudices were aided by the diſcovery that they ſoon made, that Ellen, though ſo far ſhort of them in years, was their ſuperior in every kind of uſeful knowledge; they found ſhe every day grew into more conſideration, and the juſt preference that Mr. Mordaunt gave her in his affections, though they did not by any effort towards imitating her excellencies endeavour to leſſen, filled them with the moſt rancorous jealouſy: They ſhrunk from all Ellen's playful and affectionate attempts

tempts towards being upon a familiar footing with them, and she was soon painfully convinced that she was to look for no friendship from her sisters.

All Mr. Mordaunt's efforts to establish harmony and mutual love among the individuals of his family were in vain; it soon became to be considered as composed of two parties, of which Mrs. Mordaunt and her two elder daughters formed one, and Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen the other; the boy he had resolutely divided from his mother, and placed under the care of a friend of his own, from whose assiduity he hoped he might derive advantages, that would, in some measure, make up for the years that had been mispent.

"If," said he to Mrs. Thornton, with a sigh of the bitterest self-reproach, "if I am to do justice to the understandings of my children, or to preserve their hearts from selfishness and vanity, it must be by removing them from the influence of a woman whom I once imagined possessed of every virtue that adorns humanity.

"Ah, my dear friend," said Mr. Thornton, "your mistake is not an uncommon one, the fascination of beauty always has prevailed, and always will prevail. We can only render it harmless, by giving to our females such educations as will place all the useful energies of the understanding, and all the virtuous propensities of the heart, in conjunction with personal charms. If this can be done, the whole of human kind will benefit."

Ellen disappointed in the reciprocation of affection and pleasure which she had hoped

for

for from her own family, applied herſelf cloſer than ever to her leſſons; and the kindneſs of Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, with the friendſhip of their daughter, ſhe found no inadequate compenſation for the contrary ſentiments, that filled the boſoms of her mother and ſiſters.

The following ſummer again brought Henry into Northumberland—he and Ellen met with mutual delight, and this delight increaſed with every hour they paſſed together.

If Henry had been the companion and play-fellow of Ellen, when firſt they knew each other, he now became her friend—Ellen had already ſorrows to diſburthen—The invincible ſilence and apparent unconſciouſneſs of both Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, as to the conduct of her mother and ſiſters towards her, left Ellen at a loſs to know whether it was perceived by them or no; but ſuch reſerve on their part made it bear the propriety of her continuing equally ſilent, and ſeemingly unconſcious, from a feeling of delicacy, ſhe was not more communicative to Mary.

But with Henry ſhe had no concealments—his quick ſenſe had inſtantly revealed to him the unkindneſs of his aunt and couſins, and the warmth of his heart and temper led him to ſpeak of it to Ellen, in terms of honeſt indignation. Ellen was not angry, but ſhe was grieved—ſhe lamented her own inability to conciliate the affections of thoſe by whom ſhe moſt wiſhed to be beloved, and to love, and Henry being made ſtill more angry by ſeeing her

her grief, declared them, in expreſs terms, to be unworthy of her ſolicitude or regret.

Henry's partiality for Ellen was an additional motive to her mother's hatred, and her ſiſter's jealouſy. Mrs. Mordaunt had hitherto boaſted of her nephew as the ornament and pride of her *own* family, and ſhe could not but look upon it as a degradation to the dignity of that family, to ſee him give the moſt unequivocal manifeſtations of preferable attachment to that child of her's, whoſe birth, ſhe ſcrupled not to declare, ſhe conſidered as her greateſt misfortune.

Henry, with ſomething of a malicious archneſs, was ſo far from concealing his partiality in compliment to his aunt, that he took every opportunity of diſplaying it before her, and of magnifying the merits and acquirements of Ellen, beyond all other merits and acquirements. He needed not this method for the confirmation of a paſſion that had taken deep root in his heart.

CHAP. VII.

'He ſays he loves my daughter;
'I do think ſo too; for never gazed the moon
'Upon the water, as he will ſtand, and read,
'As 'twere my daughter's eyes.'

SHAKESPEARE.

EVERY vacation, while Henry continued at ſchool, and many days that were not vacation, when by his removal to college he became more his own maſter, were ſpent by him, upon ſome pretence or other, at Groby-Manor; each time he ſaw Ellen his attachment increaſed, for each time ſhe appeared more amiable and charming in his eyes.

Perhaps the moſt unſuſpicious proof of a good education is, that the progreſs of time is marked by the progreſs of improvement in the pupil: Ellen gave this proof of the goodneſs of her education; every ſix months ſhe had made ſome acquiſition in knowledge, or gave ſome proof that her reaſon ſtrengthened, and that her paſſions were more under controul; good habits were converted into virtues, and warm affections ripened into benevolence.

Thoſe who beſtow the name of education on a deſultory form of inſtruction, often ſuſ-

pended through idleneſs, or broke in upon by frivolous and pernicious amuſements, whoſe efforts, weak as they are, are directed wholly to filling the head, rather than to forming the heart, or cultivating the reaſon, cannot gueſs, and will not be made to believe, how much uſeful knowledge, how much vigour of mind, how much ſtrength of principle, may be produced by eleven years of wiſely directed and unremitted attention to thoſe objects.

Ellen at ſeventeen, with all the gaiety that belongs to that age, poſſeſſed great acuteneſs of diſcernment, much power of reaſon, an invincible integrity, and a command over her paſſions, which is not often met with in the moſt advanced years. Her mind was ſtored with uſeful and ornamental learning, her perſon was light and agile, ſhe had the prettieſt hands and feet in the world, her countenance was frank and intelligent, and her complexion clear and blooming. No one would have fallen in love with Ellen for her beauty, but, being in love with her, every one muſt have thought her beautiful.

Henry could now ſit whole hours with her at cheſs, or hanging over the back of her chair; any ſound that ſhe drew from her harpſichord had power to rivet him to the ſpot. Ellen could remark on the difference of his taſte now and in former times, but ſhe was not conſcious of the change that had taken place in the nature of his attachment;—her's towards him, was lively and animated, as it had always been, but being accuſtomed to

love

love him only as her couſin, ſhe thought ſhe loved him as her couſin ſtill.

Henry, however, now twenty, was no ſtranger to the nature of the paſſion which wholly occupied his mind, and being challenged upon it by his uncle, frankly declared that his hope and deſign were to gain the heart of Ellen, and that, having gained it, no earthly conſideration ſhould make him forego the poſſeſſion of her perſon.

"But your father?"—

"My father has no claims upon me but thoſe of nature: I am no eldeſt ſon, thank heaven. To me cannot be pleaded either the pride or the avarice of my family. I am deſtined to work out my own ſupport, and by that deſtiny my independence is ſecured. Oh! my uncle, give me leave to try to gain the affections of Ellen—do you ratify the gift, and my father neither will or can have any objection to our union."

"It is at leaſt fit you conſult him before you attempt to gain a heart, which, even if gained, ought not, without his concurrence, and I flatter myſelf, would not remain yours."

Oh! thought Henry, if I were once aſſured of Ellen's heart, the way would be eaſy.

"Will you, Sir, explain my hopes and my wiſhes to my father? You know I have never attempted concealment, I have always thought I had a right, as one born to independence, the independence that induſtry gives, to indulge in a love which has poſſeſſed my heart from the firſt weeks of my knowledge of

Ellen, and which will never depart from it but with my lateſt ſigh."

"I love your frankneſs, and I love your ardour, but I muſt tell you, you are miſtaken in your idea of independence. What are you, what can you be for many years to come, unſupported by your father? It is for him to ſay how you ſhall exert your induſtry, what aſſiſtances he will give to it, and what returns he may expect from the ſucceſs of it, before you can conſider yourſelf as being, or pretend to act as, an independent perſon."

"But you, Sir," ſaid Henry lowering his tone, "but you, Sir, could be favourable to my wiſhes."

"I ſhall be, I muſt be ruled by your father; all I can give Ellen will be little, and I ſhall never conſent to her becoming the wife of any man againſt the conſent of his parent."

Henry's hopes ſeemed to totter to the foundation. "What would you have me to do, Sir," ſaid he faintly, "I will put myſelf under your direction, I wiſh to conſider you as my father."

"What I *require* from you is to quit Groby-Manor: I would guard Ellen from all unneceſſary pain, and therefore if you are not to be united, I would ſpare her the pang of a diſappointed hope—At preſent, with all your inſinuating qualities, young man, I believe your heart is free."

"This is what you require of me," ſaid Henry impatiently, "what is it that you adviſe?"

"That

"That you open your mind fully to your father, and that you act implicitly as he shall direct."

"And suppose he forbids me to think no more of Ellen, do you suppose I can obey him?"

"Indeed I do, because you ought."

"And could you, Sir, at my age?"

"Ask me no questions—if you hope for my interest, you must do what I require and advise."

"With such a bribe what is it I would not do? I will be gone this very evening, nay, within this hour, if I were to see Ellen again, who knows but I might whisper a secret in her ear that might make her not uninterested in the success of my journey."

"Go, and my good wishes go with you—if you can add perseverance to your activity, you may in time have the independence you talk of, and I may have the pleasure to receive you as my son."

Henry pressed his uncle's hand between both his in speechless agitation, and ran off to conceal his falling tears.

Henry's journey was speedy, and not wholly unsuccessful. Marriage, according to the decision of Lord Villars, was to be put wholly out of the question for some years, but Henry was allowed, upon these terms, to endeavour to attach Ellen to himself, and Lord Villars promised that when his son could prove to him that he was master of the annual sum of five hundred pounds, as the fruits of his own industry, that he should then be allowed

to make her his wife. His profeſſion was to be the law; three hundred pounds a year Lord Villars propoſed to allow him, and he engaged to continue this ſum 'till Henry by his own efforts made the five hundred pounds per annum eight.

Henry already thought himſelf the huſband of Ellen, but Lord Villars's views were very different: By removing the poſſibility of a connexion, which it was not his deſire ſhould ever take place, to ſo diſtant and uncertain a period, he depended upon the viciſſitude of human events, and the inſtability of human affections; he knew much better than Henry, how long it muſt of neceſſity be before he could perform his part of the engagement, and in the lapſe of ſo many years he made ſure of his calculation, that either the power to do ſo, or the will, would be loſt. He might indeed have refuſed his conſent all together, but he had many reaſons for not doing this. Although ſteady and unbending as to the end he had in view, the means he always choſe ſhould be the gentleſt poſſible. Experience had long confirmed him in the policy of ſuch proceeding; if they ſucceeded at all, their ſucceſs was more compleat than any which violence could produce, and if violence muſt be reſorted to, it ever operated with double force for having been for ſome time withheld.

In this caſe he particularly attended to the character of Henry, the energy of whoſe mind he knew would be up in arms againſt manifeſt injuſtice or manifeſt unreaſonableneſs. It ſuited neither his family views, or his intereſt to be

at

at variance with a ſon, whoſe ſuperiority of character he was willing to make the inſtrument of family aggrandizement: he was not inattentive either to the advantage to be derived in curbing the paſſions and indiſcretions of a young man, or of the ſpur that might be given to his induſtry, by the bait of a promiſed marriage with the woman of his choice, as a reward for his virtue and his exertions: But in thus holding forth the ſugar-plumb for good behaviour, he by no means yielded the power of the rod which was ſtill to be exerciſed, if after circumſtances made it neceſſary.

Henry comprehended nothing of all this—he relied equally on the good faith of his father, and his own conſtancy, and thanking Lord Villars for his indulgence with the moſt enraptured gratitude, meaſured back his ſteps to Northumberland.

Mr. Mordaunt thought Lord Villars's deciſion both wiſe and kind, and moſt willingly gave Henry permiſſion to gain the heart of Ellen if he could.

In the character of Henry Mr. Mordaunt ſaw the ſeeds of all thoſe qualities that he could wiſh for in a huſband for his daughter; but, had he then been independent, and his wiſhes ſanctioned by the approbation of Lord Villars, Mr. Mordaunt would not willingly have truſted, at the early and tempeſtuous age of twenty, the happineſs of Ellen to his care. His diſpoſition was too ardent, and his taſte for pleaſure too eager to have given a reaſonable hope, that having thus early attained the ſummit of his wiſhes, the reſt of his life would have been

regulated by the dictates of reaſon, or even that the object which had been ſo eaſily obtained, however now highly prized, would have been able to have maintained its value in his eſtimation; but in the diſcipline of a ſeven or eight years ſtudy of the law, with Ellen for his reward, Mr. Mordaunt ſaw a courſe of education for Henry, that would, he doubted not, give ſtability to all his virtues, and train him to that power of mind, and rectitude of feeling, which would ſecure both her happineſs and his own.

All theſe arrangements were received by Mrs. Mordaunt with a ſullen diſcontent; ſhe ſmiled ſcornfully at the idea of an engagement between a boy and girl, the accompliſhment of which was not to take place until ſo diſtant a period of time, and ſhe expreſſed a wonder that her brother would ever conſent to ſo fooliſh a contract; however, as the completion of it opened no views of ſplendor or greatneſs to Ellen, ſhe took no trouble to oppoſe it, and contented herſelf with propheſying that it would all end ill.

Ellen, from the ſimplicity of her life, and the full occupation of her time, had perhaps thought leſs of love and matrimony than any girl of her age, but Henry was not the leſs dear to her for this. It is true, he made neither her ſleeping or her waking dreams, ſhe ſlept each night ſound and undiſturbed, and ſhe aroſe each morning gay and active; the day was not more tedious when Henry was away, but it was infinitely more delightful when he was there; his converſation had more charms for her than

that

that of any other of her companions, but ſhe had no deſire to enjoy his converſation apart; if things went on in their uſual courſe, Henry occurred ſeldom to her mind, but if ſhe were more than ordinarily pleaſed, or more than ordinarily chagrined, "Oh that my couſin were here!" was the firſt wiſh of her heart: Ellen heard the commendations of Henry with no ſenſation but that of a ſimple acquieſcence in their truth, but where he blamed ſhe was ſtruck with ſurpriſe, and thought not ſo much of vindicating him, as correcting a miſtake; of his merits, as equivocal, ſhe herſelf never ſpoke, no more than of the light of the ſun, they appeared equally uncontrovertable, neither thought ſhe of denying or affirming that ſhe loved him; to love Henry ſeemed to her as natural as loving herſelf; but had he never been allowed to have returned to Northumberland, when he left it on his laſt viſit to his father, however Ellen might have ſenſibly lamented the loſs of her earlieſt friend and moſt loved companion, her peace would have remained ſecure, and her heart unwounded.

Henry had hitherto been ſatisfied with the kind of love Ellen had felt for him, but he now ſought to render it more decided and appropriate.

The change in his attentions had not before eſcaped her, and the change in his language was ſtill more ſtriking. This change did not however diſpleaſe her, nor did it alarm her, till ſhe began to find ſomething very like it in herſelf. Ellen had been accuſtomed to think, nor could ſhe proceed long heedleſsly in any path; little reflection upon circumſtances made

her believe, that it was her duty to repreſs the too fervent expreſſions and intimations of Henry's regard, and to lead herſelf and him back to that calm ſtate of friendſhip, when, however delighted to be together, they were indifferent whether it were with others or alone.

In conſequence of this little plan, ſhe avoided all tete-a-tete walks, all withdrawings from ſociety, to purſue their ſtudies or amuſements together. Some times ſhe aſſumed an air of reſerve, when his heart was running over at his lips, and at others appeared not to underſtand what was ſpoken in the moſt expreſs terms.

Henry was in deſpair, for he did not find out that all theſe were ſymptoms the moſt decided in his favour.

Mr. Mordaunt amuſed himſelf ſome times with thoſe cares, as he had no objection to the hook ſtriking deep into the heart of Ellen, he ſuffered her thus to play with the line 'till ſhe was completely entangled in it.

Having heard her one day reſolutely deaf to the earneſt ſolicitation of Henry for a walk in the wood, and having ſeen him in conſequence walk off in a huff, while ſhe remained thoughtful and ſilent at her work,

"How comes this Ellen," ſaid he, "it ſeems as if Henry and you were not upon ſuch good terms as formerly?"

Ellen bluſhed.

"Or are you upon better?" ſaid Mr. Mordaunt archly. Ellen bluſhed a deeper dye, and almoſt hiding her face in her handkerchief, ſhe replied

replied faintly, "It might be poſſible I might ſee too much of my couſin."

"And do you think if there were danger that you might ſee *too* much of your couſin, I ſhould have ſuffered you to have ſeen *ſo* much?"

Ellen raiſed her eyes haſtily to her father, and as haſtily let them fall again.

"Come, my dear Ellen, if I were your lover, I might perhaps enjoy your confuſion, but as your father I muſt relieve you from it. You may follow Henry into the wood, and whatever he may ſay to you there, be aſſured he has mine and his father's ſanction for."

The inexpreſſible joy that filled the heart of Ellen at theſe words, firſt told her how much ſuch a ſanction was neceſſary to her happineſs.

Whether Ellen followed Henry into the wood, or whether ſhe waited for the explanation, till he followed her there, may be left to the deciſion of every female who reads their ſtory, but certain it is that from this evening he had allowed intereſt in her heart.

Like him, ſhe had a perfect reliance on his conſtancy, and his induſtry, but he did not ſo fully agree with her, that their happineſs was likely to be more permanent from being eſtabliſhed on the grounds of prudence and forbearance, than if they were, maugre all ſuch conſiderations, to begin it from that moment.

It mattered not, however, as to the effect, what was the opinion of either of them in this point;

point; from the decree which had declared their marriage ſhould not take place till Henry's application produced him five hundred pounds a year, there lay no appeal.

Henry took chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and began his legal career with equal diligence and acuteneſs; every vacation he ſpent at Groby Manor, and he was earneſt in diſplaying both to Ellen and her father, his habits of application and economy: Ellen relying upon his affection, and pleaſed with her proſpects in life, had no jealouſies to alarm, or anxieties to diſturb her; ſhe purſued, uninterruptedly, her accuſtomed courſe of ſtudies and amuſements, and as ſhe grew more her own miſtreſs, and more independent, they were improved into pleaſures of the pureſt kind, by being enabled to render her benevolence more active, and by ſuffering her attentions to take a wider range.

She had now nearly attained her nineteenth year, and ſhe had reſided wholly at Groby Manor for the laſt twelve months; ſhe continued however to live much with Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, under whoſe dearly beloved roof many hours of every day were paſſed; nor could any affection increaſe that which ſubſiſted between her and its highly valued inhabitants; the gratifications of taſte, and the feelings of the heart, formed the ties that bound them to each other, and the ſource of obligation, received and communicated, rendered them indiſſoluble.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

'I'll no ſay, men are villains a',
'The real harden'd wicked,
'Who hae nae check but human law,
'Are to a few reſtricted:
'But oh, mankind are unco weak,
'An' little to be truſted,
'If ſelf the wavering balance ſhake,
'Its rarely right adjuſted.'

BARRS.

IT was at this time that Lord Villars invited his ſiſter and her whole family to his houſe in Hampſhire: He had formed for his eldeſt ſon a matrimonial connexion, with Lady Almeria Weſtern, an heireſs of a large fortune, to whom he was guardian. To bring this matter to the deſired iſſue, had coſt him much artifice and trouble, and the ſucceſs of his plans filled him with not leſs pride than pleaſure: The lady was ſtill very young, and as his ſon had no attractions either of perſon or manner, he was eager to compleat the marriage before her comparative powers would lead her to make ſuch diſtinctions as might probably break it off for ever. As ſhe added a very competent ſhare of beauty to the attractions of her thouſands, it was not

to be doubted but that if ſhe appeared in the world Mr. Villars would meet with many competitors, and Lord Villars had none of that blind parental partiality that could conceal from him, in any degree, the danger of ſuch a competition. The marriage, it was therefore determined, ſhould take place immediately, it was to be celebrated in the country, and Lord Villars wiſhed, by making every circumſtance relative to it as ſplendid and dazzling as poſſible, to perſuade the young bride that ſhe was an enviable and a happy woman.

Mr. Mordaunt willingly accepted the invitation, both as an indulgence to his wife and his elder daughters, and from a deſire to introduce Ellen to a more intimate knowledge of a family than any ſhe had yet attained, of which ſhe was ſome time to make one. Henry alſo was to leave the duſt and dullneſs of his chambers, upon this feſtive occaſion, nor was there to be any one circumſtance omitted that could contribute to the ſatisfaction of any of the individuals who were to form the party to be aſſembled, joy and happineſs were to pervade the whole.—— But how vain are the plans of human wiſdom! The triteneſs of the obſervation is the proof of its truth.

Three days before the intended nuptials, the deſtined bridegroom was thrown from his horſe, and received a hurt, that in thrice as many hours deprived him of life.

It would be impoſſible to deſcribe the degrees and variety of ſorrow this event gave occaſion

caſion for. Lady Villars wept as a tender mother; her children were affected in a more or leſs degree, according to their age and ſenſibility. Lady Almeria was more ſtunned than afflicted. Mr. Mordaunt ſaw, with grief, the path that this event opened to the exaltation of Ellen. Henry's unfeigned ſorrow for the death of his brother was not unmixed with a tumultuous ſenſation, ariſing from the change that had thereby ariſen in his own ſituation, and the uncertainty how that change might operate on the deareſt wiſhes of his heart.

Theſe various emotions, however, were all within the bounds of moderation; but, to the grief and diſappointment of Lord Villars there were no bounds. The ſorrows of a parent on the death of a child appeared to be ſacred and unqueſtionable; all hearts of common humanity ſympathized with Lord Villars, but few, if any, ſuſpected the ſource from whence the extremity of his affliction proceeded.—— He had loſt his ſon, this loſs might be ſupplied—but with his ſon he had loſt the heireſs. That heireſs, by the fortunes of whom every branch of his family were to be benefited, on whoſe property he had formed in idea, a ſuperſtructure of greatneſs and power, which could be realized by no other means, and the demolition of which filled him with the cruelleſt pangs. There was indeed one way, but it was nearly hopeleſs.

On Henry had devolved the rights and the titles of his brother, could he be prevailed upon to fulfil his engagements: Lord Villars had often wiſhed him in his brother's place;

place; the ſuperiority of his character fitted him for the head of his family, but the decrees of nature could not be reverſed, and Lord Villars had endeavoured to perſuade himſelf that wealth and rank might beſtow, even upon his eldeſt ſon, the conſequence that character had denied—They might however now be united—they muſt—they *ſhould* be united. Lord Villars had taken his reſolution, and it remained only to think of the means that might put it into force.

The firſt ſtep was to break Henry's engagement with Ellen; but it was an act of ſo violent and irritating a nature as to make almoſt hopeleſs every conſequence that Lord Villars wiſhed to follow from it. It was, however, neceſſary, and that without which nothing could be done. Lord Villars well knew the tender feelings of Henry, and though he were aware he ſhould in vain attempt to overcome his ſpirit, he was not without hopes that he might work upon his heart.

For this purpoſe, the genuine ſorrow that the firſt ſenſe of his diſappointment inflicted, was ſucceeded in Lord Villars by a counterfeit affliction, in appearance as deep, as heart-breaking, and as incapable of conſolation as was ever felt by a parent for the loſs of an only and highly beloved offspring.

Henry ſoon loſt every other thought in commiſeration for his father, and in anxious endeavours to conſole him; but Lord Villars was not to be conſoled—he could no longer endure to remain at a place, where he had been deprived of the hopes of his future life

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he wiſhed to remove to a ſmaller houſe that he had on the borders of the county, and he wiſhed only to have for his companions Lady Villars, Lady Almeria, Mrs. Mordaunt, and Henry; of Lady Almeria indeed he was become ſo fond, that he could not bear her from his ſight. "She was the beloved of his loſt ſon, how could ſhe be otherwiſe than inexpreſſibly dear to him?"

For the deſire of retaining Mrs. Mordaunt he gave more genuine reaſons. He knew there were no ſchemes for the aggrandizement of her *own* family, (as ſhe always took care to denominate that of the Villars's) and for the mortification of Ellen, that ſhe would not with equal avidity ſeek to promote; he therefore ſaid, with the moſt perfect ſincerity, "that from her company he hoped more, than from any other, toward ſoothing his mind," and he earneſtly entreated Mr. Mordaunt to leave her with him for a few weeks, promiſing, at the end of that period, to bring her himſelf into Northumberland, there, with Mr. Mordaunt's permiſſion, he would ſtay ſome time, as he hoped from the quiet and ſecluſion in which he might there live, to regain more compoſure and happineſs, than he could expect to derive from more buſy and public ſcenes."

It was not poſſible for Mr. Mordaunt to refuſe his conſent to any part of what Lord Villars propoſed, but in ſpite of his wiſh to repel all ſuſpicion from his mind, there was ſomething in Lord Villars's conduct that excited very

very uneaſy ſenſations, as to the rectitude of his future intentions.

Without his being able to fix on any one circumſtance that could juſtify his fears, Mr. Mordaunt was ſtrongly poſſeſſed by the apprehenſion, that Lord Villars's grief was a cover to deſigns inimical to the happineſs of Henry and Ellen. There appeared too much plan and arrangement in all he did, to proceed from a mind wholly immerſed in grief, as he pretended his to be. The extravagant attachment that he profeſſed to Lady Almeria, with the almoſt total neglect that he manifeſted to Ellen, with the perfect ſilence he maintained as to the engagements ſubſiſting between her and Henry, and the excluding her from a party where ſhe would ſo properly have made one, all contributed to ſtrengthen this apprehenſion.

Lady Villars, who had become extremely fond of Ellen, had expreſſed a wiſh that ſhe might continue with her, but this had been mentioned only once, and ſeemed to be no more thought of. Henry, who had not ſuppoſed it poſſible it ſhould be intended ſhe ſhould leave him, expreſſed the utmoſt aſtoniſhment and reluctance when he found it was ſo deſigned, and he was told by Mrs. Mordaunt, that it was at the particular requeſt of Mr. Mordaunt that Ellen was to go away.

All theſe circumſtances conſpired to oppreſs Mr. Mordaunt's mind with very ſerious fears, but he was withheld by delicacy and reſpect to the ſorrow Lord Villars diſplayed, from

from coming to any explanation upon the ſubject with him at this time, he knew the delay of a few weeks could be of no importance, and he was willing to hope, that by giving Lord Villars more time for reflection, he might be led to ſee the injuſtice of any haſty deſign, that the poignancy of his preſent diſappointment might have ſuggeſted, of ſeparating Henry and Ellen. He was alſo cautious not to betray any ſuſpicion that might ſeem to ſuggeſt the poſſibility of ſuch a meaſure being adopted, and ſtill more ſo to avoid giving a ſanction to ſuch breach of faith, by ſeeming to expect it. He contented himſelf therefore with ſaying to Lord Villars, that he ſhould be truly glad to afford him every conſolation that he could derive from the retirement of Groby Manor, and the unwearied attentions of his family to every thing likely to contribute to his ſatisfaction, and that Ellen, he was aſſured, would think it as much her pleaſure as her duty to do all in her power to ſupply the loſs he had ſuſtained.

"We will talk farther of ſuch things," ſaid Lord Villars haſtily, "when I rejoin you in Northumberland, and it ſhall not be long before I do ſo."

Divided between hope and fear, as to what were Lord Villars's future plans, Mr. Mordaunt returned, with his daughters, to Groby-Manor: But to Ellen he communicated neither the one or the other, and happily for the eaſe of her mind, no ſuſpicion ſimilar to her father's had found admittance there. Since the

the death of Mr. Villars ſhe had been wholly occupied with the feelings of others, and all thought of ſelf had been loſt in her ſolicitude to adminiſter to the comfort of thoſe around her—the change that had taken place in the ſituation of Henry had been brought about by ſo diſaſtrous an event, that it never preſented itſelf to her mind under the form of pleaſure, but neither did it ever occur to her that a circumſtance that ſecured him an immediate ſituation in life, more affluent than that which he was to have attained by the ſlow progreſs of his perſonal efforts, could be the means of placing a barrier between them, who were ſo certainly to have been united when thoſe efforts were crowned with ſucceſs.

She returned however ſaddened by the ſcenes ſhe had witneſſed, by her ſeparation from Henry, and by ſomething of an unſettled notion, that though Lady Villars was all kindneſs and affection towards her, Lord Villars had ſhewn her more marks of neglect than regard.

CHAP. IX.

'With a father's frown at laſt
'He ſternly diſapprov'd.'

OLD BALLAD.

LORD VILLARS and his family were now removed to the Grove, and Henry appeared ſo aſſiduous in his efforts to adminiſter comfort to his father, and ſo ſincerely touched with the continuance of his grief, that Lord Villars was led to believe he might ſafely begin his operations.

One day, therefore, as they were alone together, Lord Villars, as uſual, apparently immerſed in ſorrow, and Henry, as uſual, exerting all his faculties to rouſe and amuſe him. "My dear father," ſaid he, with emotion, "it goes to my heart to ſee you thus overcome with a fruitleſs affliction, for my ſake, for the ſake of your family, endeavour to recover more power of mind."

"I am indeed overcome with affliction, but it is for the ſake of my family that I am thus overwhelmed."

"My dear Sir, we all know your paternal feelings, we all know the loſs that—"

"No, Henry, it is not *that*, it is not any ſelfiſh

ſelfiſh ſorrow that overwhelms me; I could bear my own loſs, but it is the ruin of my family involved in that loſs which I deplore."

Henry ſtarted—thoughts ruſhed into his mind, that if they had ever found entrance there before he had repelled, as too affrontive to the honour of his father, to be entertained for a moment.

"The eldeſt ſon of a noble and not opulent family," continued Lord Villars, "ſtands in ſo many relative ſituations, that his death when his place cannot be fully ſupplied by a ſucceeding brother, is no ſingle misfortune—it inflicts no ſingle wound—every branch of that family, however widely diverged, muſt ſuſtain an incurable evil."———

Henry was ſilent, he felt no inclination in himſelf to take his brother's place,—to heal theſe wounds—Lord Villars went on.

"You know the princely fortunes that Lady Almeria was to have brought to your brother, but you are miſtaken if you ſuppoſe the advantages would all have been his, you, your brothers, your ſiſters, the whole innumerable tribe of you, would have felt the beneficial effects of her property through your lives, and perhaps beyond the lateſt period of them."

"My brother's death," ſaid Henry coolly, "was very unfortunate both in its circumſtances and effects."

"In its circumſtances it certainly was, but it depends upon you to ſay whether it ſhall be ſo in its effects."

"Upon me, my Lord?" ſaid Henry, affecting more ſurpriſe than he felt.

"My

"My dear ſon, I have no reaſon to doubt the rectitude of your principles, or the tenderneſs of your heart, I can therefore have no doubt how you will act; but it is painful to me, that your duty and inclination ſhould be, however little, divided."

"Divided, my Lord! no, thank heaven, they are united, and united in ſuch bonds as no power whatever can diſſolve."

"How you charm me, my deareſt ſon! and how true is it that a wiſe ſon maketh a glad father."

Lord Villars was not accuſtomed to quote ſcripture; Henry's heart was not the lighter for his doing ſo upon this occaſion.

"It is neceſſary, my Lord, that we ſhould underſtand each other. I preſume, that we both mean that it is my duty to maintain engagements entered into voluntarily, and authoriſed by your ſanction?"

"Undoubtedly, all ſuch engagements as *can* be kept, but when a change of circumſtances has changed not only the nature of duties, but of poſſibilities, engagements that cannot be fulfilled diſſolve themſelves. I am aſſured that your own natural ſenſe tells you that you cannot *now* marry Ellen."

"Not marry Ellen! What power ſhall hinder me?"

"The power of your own mind, Sir, the ſenſe of right, the dread of my never-ceaſing abhorrence."

Henry writhed with agony.

"It is to your underſtanding, it is to your juſtice I appeal. Where is now that independence

ence on which alone you grounded your right to chooſe for yourſelf? it is your own intereſt, or the intereſt of others, that in purſuing that choice you would ſacrifice? Had you from the firſt been placed in the circumſtances you are now in, ſhould you have dared to have propoſed ſuch a choice to me? Do you believe me ſufficiently weak, or wicked, to have ſanctioned ſuch a choice? You are no longer the perſon you were when I did ſanction it; you have no longer the ſame rights, the ſame duties, you muſt no longer have the ſame conduct."

"Let me then," ſaid Henry, with a newborn hope ſpringing up in his ſoul, and brightening his eye, "let me then reſume that ſtation, where only can my happineſs and my duty be reconciled; let me again become a younger brother; to Frederic, with all my heart and ſoul, will I make over all my rights of primogeniture-ſhip."

"It is not in your power, Sir, you cannot give him your title, unworthy as you are to retain it."

"And what is title without honor? You require me to give up the one, and yet are tenacious of the other."

"I am jealous of both alike, Sir, and will not ſee either proſtituted to the romantic fancy of a boy."

"You wrong my affection, my Lord, indeed you wrong it, it is founded on reaſon and on virtue."

"I ſhould be leſs ſurpriſed at the warmth with which you purſue it," returned Lord Villars,

Villars, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, if it were founded upon beauty; your paſſion, Henry, wants the ſtamp that will alone make it paſs current in the world."

"Beauty! Ellen is an angel."

"Yet this angel of yours will have no objection to becoming your wife, though ſhe bring you for her dowry *ruin* and a father's deteſtation."

"Oh! no, no, ſhe would reject, ſhe would renounce me for ever, rather—"

"And can you admire that rectitude of mind in her that you refuſe to imitate? But we talk not of your ruin, Sir, after the degeneracy of mind that you have betrayed in this converſation, were you alone concerned, I would not trouble myſelf to withhold you from it. But *I* muſt not ſo far forget *my* duties, whatever *you* do *yours*, as to ſuffer you to involve in your deſtruction the deſtruction of a family. My hopes for the eſtabliſhment of you all were placed on your brother's match with Lady Almeria, you have ſucceeded to your brother's rights, and to his engagements, and, however unworthy of it, you have alſo ſucceeded to his place in Lady Almeria's heart; ſhe views you, ungrateful boy as you are, with but too favorable an eye: Upon you it depends to give wealth and happineſs, or poverty and wretchedneſs, to your parents and to your family. We ſhall ſee the kind of heart you have by the election you make."

"The happineſs that derives wholly from wealth, and the wretchedneſs that is depend-

ent alone upon poverty, are both, in my eyes too unſubſtantial to deſerve any ſacrifices—my Lord, do with me as you will—but I will *never* be the huſband of Lady Almeria."

"And remember, peremptory Sir, that but under my heavieſt malediction ſhall you ever become the huſband of Ellen. The father and ſon here parted, and from this day the farce of affliction, except in public, was over.

CHAP. X.

'Alas! how oft' does goodneſs wound itſelf,
'And ſweet affection prove the ſource of woe.'

HOME.

BUT if the boſom of Lord Villars ſeemed lightened from a load of woe, that of Henry became inſupportably oppreſſed.

However he might be rouſed by the thought of ill treatment to a reſolute aſſertion of his own rights, or however firmly his heart might be attached to Ellen, or his determination be unchangeably fixed never to abandon her, he could not be unmoved by the diſpleaſure of his father, or by the thought that in a parent's eye he was the cauſe of unhappineſs to himſelf, or family; neither could he be inſenſible of the truth of many of Lord Villars's arguments, or unconſcious that a marriage with Ellen in the preſent circumſtances would be attended with many inconveniencies, but the thought that dwelt moſt upon his mind, and the grief that preſſed the heavieſt upon his heart, aroſe from the probability that now this marriage would never take place. He believed he knew her

too well to flatter himſelf that ſhe would become his wife againſt the expreſs prohibition of his father, and perhaps he prized her integrity too highly to wiſh that ſhe ſhould do ſo; but the ſenſe of this integrity, the certainty of the virtues from which it aroſe, made the ſuppoſition that he ſhould never call her his, an agony that he knew not how to endure—He diſtracted himſelf with endeavouring to find out ſome middle way, that might reconcile his father's expectations and his own ideas of happineſs, but, wherever he turned, his deteſted title, like Dejanira's fatal gift, ſtuck cloſe, and filled him with torment and deſpair.

His father often returned to the attack, ſometimes with an appeal to his generoſity and his reaſon, and then was his reſolution moſt in danger of yielding, and his heart torn with the extremeſt anguiſh——ſometimes with the high tone of authority, and the moſt ſevere denunciations of everlaſting diſpleaſure. Here Henry was invulnerable; when he was threatened he became as the rock, which ſeems but the more firmly fixed by the ſtorm that beats againſt it.

He knew, however, that if he did not yield, neither would his father, and that in any caſe his happineſs, and in the former both his happineſs and filial duty muſt go to wreck. Of Lady Almeria he thought little, yet it was ſome addition to his unhappineſs to ſee evident marks of that partiality with which his father had told him ſhe diſtinguiſhed him.

This

This was in part the work of Mrs. Mordaunt, and it was the buſineſs in which Lord Villars had from the firſt engaged her.

Lady Almeria, even before the death of Mr. Villars, had not been wholly inſenſible to the difference which nature had made between the brothers; ſhe had not been entirely without ſome wandering thoughts, that if Henry had been the elder brother, her deſtiny would have been the happier; but ſhe was too young and too giddy to have ſuffered thoſe thoughts to have ſunk deep in her mind, had it not been for the artifices and management of Mrs. Mordaunt, who inſinuated how generous it would be in Lady Almeria to turn her affections to Henry; ſhe formed the hope that he might return thoſe affections, and it was by her ſkill and care that the ſtrength of his engagements with Ellen were concealed from Lady Almeria; all thoſe were, however, unneceſſary cares, and founded wholly upon the imperfect knowledge that had yet been attained of the diſpoſition of Lady Almeria.

Scarcely eſcaped from the nurſery, ſhe was little known, and ſhe had credit given her for infinitely more feeling and delicacy than ſhe poſſeſſed: Of love ſhe was incapable, but having quick perceptions and a tolerable power of diſcriminating characters, ſhe was well formed for taking ſtrong though tranſient likings, and while ſuch prepoſſeſſions laſted, it would not have been any conſideration for the peace or honour of another, that would have with-held her from the gratifi-

cation of them. Stimulated by the arts of Mrs. Mordaunt, and moved by her own taſte, ſhe had taken this kind of fancy to Henry, and provided ſhe could inſpire him with the like, ſhe troubled her head little with the nature of thoſe engagements that had once ſubſiſted between him and Ellen; it was not in Henry's nature to be rude or careleſs, eſpecially where a woman, and a young and pretty woman was concerned; his addreſs, therefore, to Lady Almeria, was gentle and obliging, and though ſhe would rather it had been impaſſioned or gay, yet ſhe hoped both theſe modes were to come, when he had got over the odd fancy, as ſhe called it, of grieving for the death of a brother, which had made him heir to a title and an eſtate of ſeven thouſand pounds a year.

In the mean time, Henry alike unable wholly to explain his diſtreſs, or wholly to conceal it from Ellen, wrote her letters that filled her with the cruelleſt diſquietude—ſhe knew not how to ſhape her fears, but every added line told her that ſome misfortune awaited her. Whether ſhe were to ſuffer with or apart from Henry ſhe knew not; whether ſhe were to be the ſport of his inconſtancy, or the victim of his prudence, ſhe was unable, from the tenor of his letters, to reſolve. Had ſhe been to have choſen her fate, the deciſion was eaſy. The reſignation of Henry ſhe thought herſelf equal to, but under his depravity or unkindneſs ſhe believed ſhe muſt ſink.

In

In this ſtate of her mind, ſhe was as little able to expreſs her wiſhes and her fears with clearneſs, as was Henry himſelf; ſhe called upon him again and again to explain himſelf; while he, ſometimes thinking he ſaw a flexibility in his father that revived his hope, and ſometimes, from his increaſed ſeverity, relapſing into deſpair, alternately awakened the hopes and the fears of Ellen, without explaining to her his grounds for either.

Mr. Mordaunt ſaw the uneaſineſs of Ellen, and but too truly divined the cauſe; he forbore, however, to preſs her upon the ſubject, and thought ſhe would frankly have opened her heart to him, had ſhe had any thing certain to tell: She ſhrunk from converſing with him on a myſtery that might involve the condemnation of Henry.

Mr. Mordaunt wrote repeatedly both to Lord Villars and Mrs. Mordaunt, to remind them of their promiſe, of joining him in Northumberland, but hitherto without receiving any ſatisfactory anſwers. Lord Villars, however, beginning now to be convinced he had nothing to hope either from the ambition, the reaſon, or the obedience of Henry, reſolved to try his influence with Ellen, and by making her renounce his ſon, render it a matter of indifference, as far as their engagements, whether his ſon would renounce her or no. He determined therefore to ſet out for Northumberland. He wiſhed to conceal his intention from his ſon, but Henry had too much at ſtake to be eaſily thrown off his guard, or lulled into a falſe ſecurity.

He had conſidered, that while his father continued in Hampſhire the conteſt lay wholly between them, and that there was at leaſt a chance that his obſtinacy might outtire that of his father's. While this was poſſible, he forbore to explain himſelf with Ellen, unwilling to impreſs her mind with the painful ſenſe of his father's injuſtice, or to make a parade of his own conſtancy, but he was aware that Lord Villars's removal into Northumberland was with the deſign of bringing the diſpute before another tribunal, and a tribunal where he knew the voice of love would plead in vain, were it once imagined to be oppoſed by that of reaſon or of rectitude.

Not a moment therefore was to be loſt, leſt Ellen might be intereſted in the deciſion, by anundue application to her generoſity, or by a belief, though but a momentary one, that he could heſitate in his. He was therefore no ſooner convinced that Lord Villars meant to begin his journey to Northumberland in a few days, than he diſpatched a meſſenger with the following letter.

"The moment that any longer concealment would be unavailing and dangerous is now come. Imagine, my deareſt Ellen, the greateſt ſacrifice that can be made to avarice and ambition, and then know that ſuch a ſacrifice is required of me. While there remained a hope that the ear of reaſon and of juſtice would be open to my arguments, and my rights, I forbore to ſhock you with an inſtance of depravity, that I bluſh to think proceeds from one I am bound to reverence and to love. It having been

been found, however, that I am invincible, I know that the attack is about to be transferred from me to you. It is meant that you ſhould be ſubdued by your virtues——but remember, deareſt creature, that they are not your own rights you will be called upon to reſign, they are mine—my juſt, my ſanctioned, my unalienable rights—remember, that I never will reſign them while I breathe.—Beware of a falſe generoſity, a miſtaken virtue—diſintereſtedneſs, in this caſe, would be injuſtice; you are mine, my choſen love, my betrothed wife:—I have had my father's word that you ſhould be my wife:—Circumſtances may be changed, but I am the ſame, be you ſo too my Ellen, and we ſhall weather this ſtorm, which now ſeems to threaten the wreck of our happineſs——but our happineſs cannot be loſt while we preſerve our virtues. It is by virtue, by the moſt ſolemn engagements we are bound to each other, let us ever keep our principles in view, leſt we be miſled by the *ignus fatuus* of ſophiſtry. That cannot be generous which is unjuſt; be juſt to me, my Ellen, and I fear not your generoſity to others.

"I muſt remain where I am, while my father continues here, but no ſooner does he ſet out for Groby-Manor, than I do ſo too, and you may truſt that ſpeed will be the ſwifteſt that is winged by love."

CHAP. XI.

Tra ſi e no la Giovane ſoſpeſa
—Dub : ta un poco.
' Quin ci l' on ore il debito le peſa,
' Quindi l' incalza l' amoroſo foco.'

ARIOSTO.

THIS letter was received by Ellen with a variety of emotions: ſhe read in it a certainty of her misfortune, but ſhe read in it alſo an aſſurance of the conſtancy, and generoſity of Henry:——She acknowledged no right that could divide her from him, but ſhe trembled at the power that in adhering to him ſhe knew ſhe muſt oppoſe;——her heart told her, there was no happineſs without Henry, and the ſource of rectitude ſhewed her, that there was no eſcape from miſery in becoming his wife, under the prohibition of a parent.

She had now no reaſon for any reſerve to her father, ſhe ſhewed him Henry's letter, which, however, told him nothing but what his penetration had before diſcovered.

" Is it poſſible," ſaid he, " that Lord Villars can be thus cruel and unjuſt?"

"

"If he design to appeal to me," said Ellen, "he must mean to abide by my decision."

"And your decision, my Ellen, what would be your decision?"

"Alas! I know not. It is no broad path that lies before me—Intricate and scarcely to be made out by such an one as I, is the line of duty, that, if I could be sure of, I hope I should pursue."

Mr. Mordaunt pressed Ellen to his heart.

"Henry pleads his rights strongly, they are indubitable, they cannot be cancelled by the mandate of ambition or avarice, though issued by a parent. But to be the author of his ruin, and his filial disobedience———Oh! my father, such decisions are beyond my reasoning faculties, they must be decided by the impulse of my heart, not, I hope, more firmly attached to Henry than to virtue."

"Excellent creature!" said Mr. Mordaunt, and Ellen felt herself encouraged by the praise.

"It may be generous and right that Henry should refuse to abandon me: It may be virtuous and necessary that I should resign him."

Thus did poor Ellen endeavour to balance the reasons that made for and against her wishes, but she bewildered her understanding without relieving her heart.

"I will see Lord Villars———I will hear, (dangerous as it may be) I will hear Henry. If I must lose him, he shall not be torn from me, I will give him up. Oh! my father, if the sacrifice must be made, allow me to make it."

"No

"No other can make it:—I abjure Lord Villars's ſophiſtry—Having once authorized your engagements with Henry, I cannot recall my ſanction; you are miſtreſs of your fate—I am willing to aſſiſt your judgment, but I muſt not controul your will."

"My will?" ſaid Ellen, ſighing, "alas! how little muſt that be conſulted in this debate."

Ellen paſſed three days in what might be called a labyrinth of thought, rather than a chain of reaſoning, when from what ſhe regarded as an evident principle of duty, "the ſtrict adherence to her engagements," ſhe had drawn concluſions the moſt favourable to her happineſs, her deductions were croſſed by a principle as evident, as that of the obedience of children to their parents, and all her reaſoning thrown into confuſion. Again ſhe began, again ſhe found herſelf conducted to a certain point, and again confuſed and bewildered, ſhe found ſhe had loſt her way.

From ſuch a maze of contrary obligations ſhe knew not how to extricate herſelf, yet ſhe loſt not hope, while ſhe perceived that which ever way ſhe turned, wherever ſhe directed her view, *the wiſh to do right* ſtill appeared, as a beacon on a diſtant hill, pointing out the coaſt to which ſhe meant to direct her courſe.

It was impoſſible, except where the mind was wholly given up to ſelfiſhneſs, or reſentment, to live with Ellen without loving her; the evenneſs of her temper, her promptitude in obliging, muſt ſubdue all leſſer prejudices. This had been the caſe with her ſiſters, though

their

their early eſtrangement from her, and the difference that ſubſiſted in their manner of thinking, forbade any of that tender intereſt and interchangement of ſentiments in which true friendſhip conſiſts; they now loved her full as well as moſt reputed friends love each other, and now that pity was added to their affection, they felt and ſhewed for her a ſolicitude, that neither they or herſelf had before thought them capable of.

Charlotte in particular was much moved by the evident diſtreſs of Ellen's mind, and the calmneſs with which ſhe endured it—ſhe thought there was ſomething heroic in ſuch compoſure, under ſuch circumſtances, and ſhe exerted all her abilities to conſole and ſupport her: But, however Ellen was ſoothed by her ſympathy, ſhe could not be aſſiſted by her counſel. Charlotte could ſee the matter only in one light——ſhe expatiated on the injuſtice of Lord Villars, on the merit of conſtancy, and the obligation of maintaining an engagement, and when Ellen preſſed her with the queſtion, "Would you, Charlotte, be the wife of any man, who in forming his ties with you, muſt break all thoſe that bind him to his family, and incur the everlaſting reſentment of his parent?" Charlotte could only reply, Lord Villars had no right to be diſpleaſed, and that the peace of Henry ought to be dearer to her than that of all his family beſide.

"But the peace of Henry," ſaid Ellen, "is involved in the religious performance of his duty as a ſon."

"No,"

"No," Charlotte would reply, "ſuch conduct as Lord Villars holds diſſolves the bonds of filial duty; you ought to ſet him at defiance, and be happy in the love of each other."

Ellen would have been glad to have thought ſo too, but in a mind as free from the prejudices of ſelfiſhneſs as her's was, things are not ſeen as they are wiſhed to be, but as they are.

On the evening of the third day, Charlotte and Ellen were walking in the wood, wholly engroſſed with this one ſubject, when as they were returning to the houſe they were ſuddenly met by Henry.

"We are once more together my Ellen," cried he, ſnatching her to his heart, "and no power on earth ſhall part us."

Ellen, who had been engaged rather in debating whether ſhe ſhould chooſe misfortune, than in deploring it as already felt, had, ſince the receipt of Henry's laſt letter been more depreſſed, than agitated; but his ſudden appearance, and the vehemence of his addreſs, communicated in a moment to her boſom all the emotion with which his own was convulſed;—ſinking from his arms, rather than being able to try to diſengage herſelf from them, "We are indeed together," ſaid ſhe, "but, alas! upon what terms?"

"Upon terms that heaven and earth muſt approve—Upon terms that give me a right to ſay I will never reſign you."

"Oh! be leſs vehement!" cried ſhe, and reſting wholly upon Charlotte, her convulſive

ſobs

ſobs gave Henry the moſt lively alarm;——— never had he ſeen diſtreſs in this form; never had he before ſeen the countenance of Ellen disfigured by the violence of any paſſion.

"Why not reſt in my arms? Why not weep in my boſom?" cried he mildly, "am I not your huſband. Oh Ellen, is it poſſible you can have decided againſt me?"

"No! no! no!" ſaid ſhe. Charlotte unable to ſupport her, yielded her to the impaſſioned Henry, who holding her in his arms, ſat down with her on the graſs. Tears relieved the almoſt burſting heart of Ellen; ſhe ſuffered them for ſome time to flow as ſhe hid her face on Henry's ſhoulder, then rouſing herſelf, "I am better," ſaid ſhe, "let us return to the houſe, and, my dear Henry, if you would have me able to act as you wiſh, you muſt not thus diſtreſs me."

"Deareſt Ellen forgive me, I will be all calmneſs. all reaſon."

Ellen with difficulty moved along, but growing every moment more compoſed, the emotion that the ſudden appearance of Henry had given her, taught her the more to fear the power of her feelings, and to arm herſelf with double reſolution againſt being governed by them.

As they approached the houſe they were met haſtily by Mr. Mordaunt.

"Do you know who is arrived?" ſaid he.

"My father," cried Henry, "how nearly has he eluded my vigilance!"

Now, ſaid Ellen to herſelf, is the moment of trial come. Lord Villars appeared, Henry ſaw

ſaw the pallid cheek of Ellen and the whiteneſs of her lips.

"My Ellen," cried he, "do not deſert yourſelf, do not deſert me."

"Oh, heaven direct me," ſaid Ellen.

"Heaven does direct you, heaven dictates what you ought to do, heaven cannot approve of violated vows."

"Nor of diſobedience!" ſaid Lord Villars ſternly.

"Forbear," ſaid Ellen to Henry. "My Lord."

"Forgive my interruption, Madam, to you I mean no harſhneſs; to the rectitude of your mind I know I may appeal, from the ungoverned paſſion of that intemperate young man."

"Temperance were treachery in this caſe. My Lord, I ſee your deſign, you mean to tamper with the virtues of Ellen, you mean to ſubdue her conſtancy by her generoſity—but—"

"I am above diſguiſe, Sir, I do mean to prove the virtue you have ſo vaunted; it is you who have ſaid, that Ellen would renounce you for ever, rather than accept you at the price of your diſobedience."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Henry.

"And moſt truly have you ſaid, my Henry," interrupted Ellen, "and moſt ſincerely do I thank you for it."

"I never ſaid ſo; or, if I did,—Oh! Ellen, do not undo both yourſelf and me."

"My Lord," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "you are too precipitate—Ellen ought not to be,

ſhe

ſhe *ſhall* not be ſo perſecuted; you have nothing to fear, nothing that you ought to fear from her cooleſt deliberation, and it is only the cooleſt deliberation that ought to decide in ſuch a caſe as this."

And yet, thought Ellen to herſelf, the deciſion is made; what but *one* thing can I do?

"I meant not to have been thus precipitate—I meant not now to have entered upon the ſubject, but the daring impatience of that unworthy boy,———My dear Madam," turning to Ellen, "I know and revere your virtues, it is from them I hope the ſalvation of my family, pray take my arm, let me ſupport you."

"My Lord, I want no ſupport."

"Yes, my Ellen, you do, you want the ſupport of a parent," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "take my arm."

"Thank you, Sir," ſaid Ellen faintly and almoſt overcome, and reſting on her father's arm ſhe reached the houſe.

Here ſhe found Mrs. Mordaunt, who greeted her with her uſual coldneſs, but ſeeing her agitation ſaid, "Yes, yes, I knew it would come to this, I always foretold this, I always ſaid that the intereſt of a whole family were not to be ſacrificed to the fooliſh fancy of a boy and girl, who knew not what was good for them."

"Dear Mamma!" ſaid Charlotte.

"No harm, Ma'am," ſaid Ellen mildly, "ſhall happen to any body through my means, if I can prevent it."

"Retire,

"Retire, my dear," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "I am ſure you wiſh to be in your own room."

Ellen moved towards the door, but Henry, who had hitherto kept a gloomy ſilence, now ruſhed forward, "You do not go, Ellen, you do not go, without ſuffering me to ſpeak to you, without hearing what I have to ſay."

"She knows you have nothing to ſay," interrupted Lord Villars, "that ſhe ought to hear; Ellen is indeed the excellent perſon you have always deſcribed her, the exemplar of her ſex."

"Henry has a right to be heard, my Lord, and I mean to hear him; nor have I more inclination than I have power to refuſe him."

"My kind, my beloved Ellen!"

Ellen held out her hand to him, "Oh!" ſaid ſhe, in a low voice, "that I could be as much the one as I believe I am the other!" Then ſpeaking aloud, "At eight to-morrow morning I will ſee you alone, at preſent I beg I may be allowed to retire."

Lord Villars, who believed he ſaw the deſtruction of his hopes in the ſeverity of her air towards him, and her kind indulgence to his ſon, ſtood thunderſtruck and confounded, while the wretched Henry, who argued the contrary but too juſtly, even from her very kindneſs, ſunk ſpiritleſs into a chair, while the warm blood forſook his cheek, and every limb quivered with agitation. Lord Villars endeavoured by a long detail of the circumſtances of his family, to convince Mr. Mordaunt's

daunt's reaſon of the neceſſity of the conduct he held, and by artful praiſes of Ellen to ſooth the indignity offered to her.

Mr. Mordaunt diſdained to reply to his reaſonings, or to thank him for his commendations; he aſſured him, that it was neither the wiſh of his daughter, or himſelf, that ſhe ſhould enter into his family without his approbation.

"But my Lord," ſaid he, "you have in my opinion, by your former ſanction to the affections of your ſon, put it out of your power now to with-hold your conſent to his marriage. All you have a right to do, is to endeavour to convince both him and my daughter, of the inconvenience that now attends it, and to induce them, if poſſible, by the weight of your reaſons, to reſign rights, which nothing but the moſt apparent injuſtice can withhold."

Lord Villars was ſtung to the quick by the cold contempt of Mr. Mordaunt.

"I am then to undo my whole family for a punctilio? Mine was only a conditional conſent, it *could* only be a conditional conſent. It was my *ſecond* ſon that I would have allowed to have married your daughter, no one would have dared to have aſked me for my firſt."

"Nor do I aſk you now, my Lord, but if you have made a bad bargain, common honeſty requires you ſhould ſtand to it, except thoſe with whom you have made it will generouſly releaſe you."

"Would

"Would you then," ſaid Mrs. Mordaunt (paſſionately) "would you have an ancient and noble family fall into ruin, rather than thwart the momentary fancy of a fooliſh girl and an obſtinate boy? Rather be all the engagements that have been made ſince the days of Adam broken, than that ſuch a conſequence ſhould be incurred."

"Ellen would bring ruin into no family: I have, however, ſaid, that I think ſhe and Henry are the only proper umpires in this diſpute, and I could wiſh a ſubject to be dropped, upon which if I ſpeak at all, I muſt ſpeak very harſh truths."

"I would endeavour," ſaid Lord Villars, with an air as if he were to be a ſufferer for conſcience ſake, "I would endeavour to get over the ſcruples of my mind, in allowing one unworthy child to take his own way to ruin, which it ſeems with ſome people would much exalt my character; but when the intereſts of my other dear and innocent children are involved in his folly, however my name may be branded I will adhere to what I know to be right, and though I may be unable to prevent this act of madneſs, I will never have to reproach myſelf with having conſented to it."

"Your Lordſhip may reſt perfectly at eaſe both as to your conſcience, and the part Ellen will take; however either ſhe or myſelf may wiſh her the wife of your ſon, we can have no deſire that ſhe ſhould become your daughter."

"I ſee,

"I ſee, however," ſaid Lord Villars in a paſſion, "I ſee that ſhe deſigns it, but at her peril let her purſue the deſign———poverty while I live, and my eternal curſe when I come to die, ſhall ſadden her days and torment her mind."

Mr. Mordaunt aroſe, "I leave you, my Lord, and I would leave you under the miſtake that ſo unworthily afflicts you, but when you find yourſelf maſter of your wiſhes, you ſhall not have cauſe to think that you owe the completion of them either to the duplicity or the vehemence of your conduct. I know Ellen perfectly well, and I will ſtake my life that in the preſent circumſtances ſhe will *never* marry your ſon."

Lord Villars, on an aſſurance ſo agreeable to him, felt all his anger ſubſide in a moment; he did not wiſh to quarrel with Mr. Mordaunt, ſo, catching his hand, he cried, "My dear brother forgive me, forgive the effuſions of a father's ſolicitude for a large family, whoſe well being in the world depends upon the iſſue of the preſent conteſt; how willingly would I make any ſacrifice ſhort of the intereſt of this family, for the happineſs of being ſtill more cloſely united with you."

Mr. Mordaunt withdrew his hand.

"You will give me leave to retire, my Lord, it is not poſſible to form any judgment but one on the events that have paſſed, and the conſequence of that judgment muſt be, that all intercourſe between us hence forward muſt ceaſe."

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt withdrew, and left Lord Villars and his ſiſter to rail and to rejoice, for after what Mr. Mordaunt had ſaid, they neither of them entertained any apprehenſion but that Ellen would break her engagement with Henry.

CHAP

CHAP. XII.

'No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
'Their ſad love-lorn lamentings claim,
'No ſhepherd's pipe—Arcadian ſtrains,
'No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
'The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
'The oft' atteſted pow'rs above,
'Theſe were the pledges of their love.'

BARNS.

HENRY had not been preſent at the converſation that had paſſed between his father and Mr. Mordaunt; as ſoon as he had recovered from the emotion into which the laſt words of Ellen had thrown him, he had withdrawn to the parſonage, there to pour out his griefs to the commiſerating Mr. and Mrs. Thornton: They, while they endeavoured, by the ſofteſt arts of pity to adminiſter ſome balm to his wounds, ſought to inſpire him with fortitude to ſupport the conſummation of his misfortune, which, in the preſent circumſtances they conſidered as inevitable.

Ellen paſſed the night in endeavouring to ſtrengthen herſelf in the reſolution, which ſhe ſaw was the only one ſhe could now adopt without

without incurring the reproaches of her own heart, and involving Henry in diſobedience and ruin—But ſhe dreaded his vehemence, and though ſhe perſuaded herſelf *that* alone would not be able to overpower her judgment, grounded as it was, upon the beſt reaſoning ſhe was able to command, yet ſhe ſhrunk from the conteſt, and had ſhe not had more compaſſion for him than for herſelf, ſhe would have explained herſelf in writing, and ſpared them both the pangs of a fruitleſs altercation; but to comply with his wiſhes in every thing that militated not againſt his duty, ſhe thought the moſt ſacred of her own, and ſhe kept the appointment made the preceding night.

The moment ſhe caſt her eyes upon him ſhe ſaw, the trial that awaited her was of a different kind to the one for which ſhe had been preparing herſelf. All animation was fled from his countenance, a ſettled deſpair had taken poſſeſſion of his features, and as he approached her the tears fell in large drops from his eyes.

"Dear Henry!" ſaid ſhe, holding out her hand to him—He took it, and preſſed it cloſely to his lips.

"So kind, and yet ſo determined!—I do not complain, Ellen, but ſurely I ought not to have been condemned unheard."

"Unheard! Am I not here for the purpoſe of liſtening to all you have to ſay?"

"Yet my father tells me I have nothing to hope."

"Do

"Do not believe Lord Villars rather than me?—You have every thing to hope that in your unprejudiced reaſon you would wiſh to hope, I think I may venture to promiſe you ſhall decide for me."

"Oh! that I might, then ſhould I never quit this dear hand 'till you had promiſed to pledge your faith with it at the altar."

"Would you then brave your father's diſpleaſure? Would you be content to live in perpetual enmity with him? Would you entail diſtreſs and poverty on your family?"

"Oh! no, no: ——— My father would withdraw his objections —— Juſtice, reaſon, would compel him to withdraw them. My family ſhall never receive injury from me. I have offered to diveſt myſelf of my birthright, to reſume the ſtation which Ellen's love might be allowed to bleſs—I have been told I cannot diveſt myſelf of my title, and that that title muſt be ſupported by riches; that the fortune I may obtain by marriage muſt be ſuch as will provide for my numerous brothers and ſiſters, whoſe neceſſary proviſion will otherwiſe reduce the family eſtate below the decorous appendage of a title. I am reminded that ſuch have ever been the known family views, and that I acknowledged the force of them when I pleaded my being a ſecond ſon, as an unanſwerable reaſon why I might be allowed to chooſe for myſelf; however my heart or my underſtanding may revolt from ſuch reaſoning, I mean not to combat them; I mean to act as if convinced of their truth, and their rectitude, and had I

not had reaſon to have believed the cauſe already prejudged, I had a propoſal to have made to you, that I perſuaded myſelf might have reconciled duty and inclination, have ſatisfied my father, and made us happy."

Ellen's heart fluttered with revived hope.

"And what is your propoſal? Be aſſured there is no prejudgment, only ſhew me how I can be yours, without violating the immutable obligation of obedience to a parent, and you will not be more ready to propoſe, than I ſhall be to comply."

"My propoſal," ſaid he, ſtill ſpeaking faintly, "is grounded on the knowledge I believed I had of your heart, on its total freedom from any wiſh for ſplendor, for ſhew, ——"

"Name them not, reconcile my duty and my love, and your taſk is over."

"Deareſt creature, how could I for a moment ſuſpect that love? How could I for a moment believe it leſs pure, than my own?"

"And did you? Could you?"

"You are calumniated, my Ellen; I have been taught to fear, that, awed by my father's threats of everlaſting diſpleaſure, you ſhrunk from a marriage, which under that diſpleaſure would be a ſource only of poverty and diſtreſs to you."

"How am I beſet on all ſides! How allured by inclination, how ſtimulated by reſentment to quit the rugged path of duty: Support my rectitude, my dear Henry, by your own, and make me no propoſal that is not warranted by the ſanction of virtue."

"What

"What I propoſe is this: That I ſhall purſue the line of life marked out for me before the unfortunate death of my brother; that the annual difference there will be between the allowance my father will make me as an inmate of Lincoln's-Inn, and that which I ought to have as his eldeſt ſon, ſhall accumulate, and be conſidered as a fund upon which I ſhall draw for your fortune; that I ſhall not claim your hand but upon the condition that it was firſt promiſed me. While my father lives the ſplendor of the family will be ſupported by him; when he dies, though it muſt ſuffer a temporary eclipſe, it will be in no danger of being annihilated.—No wonder," ſaid Henry, interrupting himſelf, "that you ſmile, I almoſt diſdain to dwell upon ſuch conſiderations, but if there is no preaching people into reaſon, it is well for the ſake of ſelf to accommodate ourſelves as well as we can to their folly. As I have no hope that the ſavings I have propoſed to be made from my annual allowance will be conſidered as ſatisfactory to the wants and the wiſhes of the family, I further propoſe that in the event of my coming to the eſtate, ſuch a part of it ſhall be appropriated to the uſe of my brothers and ſiſters, as in ſome given number of years may make up the ſum that my father has fixed in his own mind as a proper fortune to be brought into the family by his eldeſt ſon's wife: At the end of this time I ſhall reſume the whole of the eſtate, and the name of Villars recover its luſtre. Thus no injury will be done to the younger branches of the family,

you, my Ellen, will after all be a fortune, the family ſplendor will be untarniſhed, and all this will be purchaſed on our part by a few years of obſcurity and happineſs."

Though Ellen had a rectitude of principle and underſtanding, that made her perfectly comprehend, and reſolutely adhere to that plaineſt of nature's dictates, the obedience due to a parent, ſhe was too young and too noble-hearted to calculate the inconveniences of a narrow income, or to have ſuffered them to have influenced her deciſion, if ſhe had calculated them, while they could teach only herſelf and him, whom ſhe doubted not, would have conſidered the poſſeſſion of her hand as a full compenſation: Her heart beat quick at this propoſal of Henry's, her eyes ſparkled with pleaſure. "And what ſays your father to this plan?" cried ſhe, trembling with the eagerneſs of hope.

"What ſays he! What can he ſay? Has he any right to object?"

"But *does* he object?" ſaid Ellen, with a voice ſcarcely articulate.

"Deareſt Ellen, will you hazard nothing for me? When every claim of juſtice is ſatisfied, are we to be undone for a punctilio?"

"Your father does *not* then approve your plan?"

"But he will approve it, he will be compelled to approve it—all the world will unite in his condemnation if he does not."

"When he *does* approve, be aſſured of my moſt cheerful, my moſt delighted concurrence."

"And

"And without that approbation you will do nothing for me?"

"Alas! what *can* I do? Had it been only juſtice that was to have been ſatisfied, ſhould we ever have been in any danger of being ſeparated? Will this plan of yours at all avert your father's diſpleaſure? Will it ſave you from diſobedience, or from the effects of it? Will you not ſtill have a parent's enmity to deprecate? And without the concurrence of Lord Villars how can your plan itſelf take place? How can its beneficial effects be felt? How can the claims of juſtice, which you ſeem yourſelf to allow, be ſatisfied?"

"Time will do all for us; my father will forgive when he ſees that the conſequences he ſo dreads have not followed the ſtep he forbids; we ſhall have injured no one, and happy in each other.—"

"Oh! Henry, Henry! how ſhould we be happy? There can be no happineſs for a child in diſobedience to a parent; no ſophiſtry, no hope of ſelfiſh joy can obſcure ſo evident a truth, can allure me to dare its violation—we have no choice if Lord Villars perſiſts in his oppoſition, we muſt ſubmit, and——"

Part—ſhe would have ſaid, but her tongue faltered and ſhe ſtopt.

"Oh! Ellen, you have not the heart to utter the word, and can you perſiſt in the thing?"

"Cruel neceſſity forces it upon us, we cannot do otherways."

"Well then be it ſo," ſaid he after a pauſe, "but let not the parting be for ever; let us

yield in appearance to the preſent ſtorm, let us preſerve our hearts for each other, and refer our happineſs to a time when no imagined duty, no real injuſtice can ſtep in between us."

"Dear Henry, do not ſo tempt me, ſee you not the fallacy of this? See you not that we ſhould live on falſhood, and that the hypocriſy that affects the air of a difficult virtue, is in itſelf, the worſt vice?"

"All your concluſions, Ellen, tend to one point, would you then have me make obedience perfect? Do you adviſe me to marry Lady Almeria?"

"I am but a bad caſuiſt," cried the weeping but unreſenting Ellen, "but I do not ſee that the duty which requires you to give up your own choice to the will of your father, exacts that you ſhould adopt his in oppoſition to your own."

"What then does he gain by the obedience you ſo unfeelingly enforce?"

"At preſent the ſatisfaction that muſt reſult to a parent from even the partial compliance of a child with his wiſhes, and, in future, the more complete gratification of ſeeing your choice and his the ſame."

"And can you bear to point out ſuch a futurity? Can you *deſire* it?"

"Let us not," ſaid Ellen trembling, "let us not deceive ourſelves, it is with this hope the preſent ſacrifice is required, our renunciation of each other muſt be compleat—it muſt be for *ever*."

"For

"For *ever* be it then," ſaid Henry, ruſhing towards the door, "for now I ſee that you deſire it."

"Stay, dear Henry."

"Dear! do you ſay I am dear?"

"*Moſt* dear! do not inflict upon me the only trial to which I feel myſelf unequal: I can bear to give you up, but I cannot bear that you ſhould believe me fickle or intereſted."

"Oh would to God I could believe you ſo, but while I think of you as you are, how ſhall I imitate you in the virtue that ſo exalts you in my eyes?"

"It is from ſad neceſſity that I act; you too muſt feel its irreſiſtible power, and all the merit that either of us can have is in the manner in which we ſupport that neceſſity."

"I do not yet admit the neceſſity. If you refuſe to reſign the rights you have over me, my father muſt yield to them."

"Let us not go over the ſame ground," ſaid the almoſt exhauſted Ellen, "nothing but Lord Villars's conſent to our marriage will ever juſtify me to myſelf in becoming your wife, or you in my eyes for accepting me as ſuch. Lord Villars has declared, and who can doubt his firmneſs, that his conſent never ſhall be obtained, the conſequence is obvious——dear Henry, receive my laſt farewell!"

"Never, never will I give you up——I will never relinquiſh you,——nay, you muſt not, ſhall not leave me."

"I *muſt*, for wherefore ſhould I ſtay?"

"Go then, but be aſſured I ſhall haunt you

wherever you go——my father ſhall gain nothing but my miſery by his injuſtice——if I cannot be your's I will not be another's."

"You will think better of it," ſaid Ellen, as ſhe opened the door, "farewell." She cloſed it, and, her taſk over, her powers forſook her, and ſhe ſunk into a chair motionleſs and nearly without recollection. There was nobody to obſerve her, and ſhe had time to return to herſelf. Suddenly ſhe heard a movement in the room ſhe had quitted, ſhe aroſe haſtily, and paſſing up a pair of back ſtairs, took refuge in her own chamber.

Henry, given up to his emotions, had remained where Ellen had left him; the ſudden entrance of Lord Villars rouſed him from his grief, he ſtarted at the ſight of him, as at ſomething noxious, and paſſing furiouſly by him, quitted the houſe on the inſtant.

Lord Villars required no other proof of the part Ellen had taken, and exulting in the ſucceſs of his ſchemes, ſent a reſpectful meſſage to her, deſiring he might have the honour of returning his thanks in perſon. This was, however, a mark of complaiſance that Ellen thought ſhe might well be allowed to refuſe him, ſhe therefore excuſed herſelf by writing theſe words on a ſcrap of paper.

"As Lord Villars will learn from his ſon the ſubmiſſion that has been paid to his will, there is no doubt but he will willingly excuſe himſelf the ſight of a perſon whoſe preſence muſt be a reproach to him. Ellen therefore begs leave to decline the honor of appearing before him."

Lord

Lord Villars, even in the midſt of his triumph, could not help feeling the ſuperiority both of Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen, and he withdrew from Groby Manor ſucceſsful it is true, but mortified; and his pride ſeverely hurt, that though he had overcome by the force of his power, he had not been able to deceive by his duplicity.

CHAP. XIII.

—'Cancel all our vows,
'And when we meet at any time again,
'Be it not ſeen in either of our brows,
That we one jot of former love retain."

DRAYTON.

HENRY had found ſhelter at the Parſonage, and it required all Mr. Thornton's influence to bring his mind to any degree of moderation: Diſpleaſed yet enraptured with Ellen; indignant againſt his father, yet feeling the principle of filial love and filial duty ſtrong in his heart, his paſſions were wrought up to a pitch of intemperance that allowed his reaſon no weight, and urged him to reſolutions that could only perpetuate and juſtify his miſery. Mr. Thornton at length ſucceeded in calming him, but he could not prevail with him to relinquiſh the idea of endeavouring to extort from Ellen a promiſe that ſhe would preſerve her heart for him, and wait in the hope that he might by ſome means induce his father to withdraw his objections. Mr. Thornton in vain repreſented that he had no reaſon to doubt Ellen's joyful acquieſcence to any meaſure that tended to unite them, and which had Lord Villars's ſanction,

ſanction, nor had he any thing to fear from the lightneſs of her mind, or the variableneſs of her inclination; but to ſeek any conceſſion on her part at this time, and much more any promiſe, would be to make all the reſolution ſhe had hitherto ſhewn appear as a mean ſubterfuge, and would, in fact, in its effect, entirely deſtroy what ſhe moſt intended to eſtabliſh, his obedience to his father.

Henry felt as if there were ſtill ſomething to be done, and it was intolerable to him, to ſit down in inactive hopeleſſneſs. It was ſome relief to him to ſeek Ellen in the wood, though ſure not to find her there: He acknowledged every evening that the purſuit was vain, yet went out every morning with revived expectation. He wrote and his letter was returned; but again he wrote becauſe to write was to do ſomething, and while he made the effort, he for ſo many moments ſuſpended deſpair.

Ellen, not a whit leſs afflicted, though more patient than Henry, had indulged herſelf in one day's ſecluſion from her family: The happineſs ſhe had given up was too dear to her heart, not to demand from her a ſincere tribute of grief to its memory. And indeed the agitation that her mind had undergone for the laſt twenty-four hours, made it neceſſary that in private ſhe ſhould calm and regulate her feelings. She ſaw, however, her father, and found in his careſſes and approbation the beſt reward for what ſhe had done, and her beſt ſtimulative to perſeverance.

On

On the morrow ſhe appeared again in the breakfaſt room, reſumed her accuſtomed employments, and endeavoured, by ſomething like cheerfulneſs to do her part toward diſpelling the gloom which ſeemed to have ſettled over Groby Manor. By this conduct ſhe rendered innoxious the unkindneſs of her mother—All her taunts and ſarcaſms rather lacerated her own than Ellen's heart, while Ellen appeared unconſcious of her deſign to hurt her. She forbore to reproach others, and felt ſhe could herſelf be no juſt object of reproach to any one. With the thoughts of the future ſhe did not diſturb herſelf—perhaps ſhe believed that the image of Henry would never depart from her mind, but ſhe neither told herſelf that it would be ſo, or encouraged the idea when it occurred. Having reſolutely entered the path of duty, ſhe was reſolved to tread it, lead where it would, and if, in the preſent depreſſed ſtate of her mind, ſhe formed a wiſh, it was to hear that Henry was equally reaſonable with herſelf.

But however this temper of mind was the certain road to happineſs in time to come, for the preſent ſhe was more than ſufficiently wretched to have gratified the wiſh of the moſt malignant: It was not poſſible to obliterate with a wiſh all remembrances of paſt delight, or promiſed felicity—it was not poſſible to forget that Henry had been alike the choice of her fancy and of her reaſon; that his love had been her beſt treaſure, and that in relinquiſhing it ſhe made him as wretched as ſhe made herſelf---the thought indeed of his

miſery

miſery was often more than ſhe could bear. The work was ſuſpended, and the book dropped from her hand, when her too faithful memory repreſented his tranſports and his deſpair. His idea was, in fact, ſo cloſely united with every thing ſhe did, or thought, with every object around her, and with every occupation ſhe attempted, that to forget him was impoſſible, and ſhe ſometimes doubted if ſhe ſhould ever be able to remember him with leſs anguiſh than at the preſent moment.

It is true, he gave her very little time for making the experiment, he was every day at Groby Manor, and though ſhe conſtantly refuſed to ſee him, this did not make him forbear attempting to throw himſelf in her way, in all their formerly moſt frequented walks. He wrote to her continually, his letters were unſealed but ſhe returned them unread; again he wrote to her, and he employed her ſiſters to inform her, that he could not believe ſhe did him the injuſtice to refuſe to look into his letters.

Mr. Mordaunt frequently ſaw him, and as he was touched with the moſt ſincere compaſſion for his ſufferings, was willing to tolerate this unreaſonableneſs for ſome little time, hoping that ſuch indulgence would lead him to reſume more command over himſelf: But, in the mean time his heart bled for Ellen, in whom, in ſpite of her ſelf-command and fortitude, this perſecution had the moſt ſenſible effect.

At length Mr. Mordaunt found himſelf obliged to tell the unfortunate Henry, that he could

could no longer ſuffer him to haunt the environs of Groby Manor, and that if he wiſhed to preſerve his friendſhip, he muſt quit Northumberland: Henry's ſpirit took this ill, and he declared that nothing but an order under Ellen's hand ſhould induce him to quit the country.

Ellen's heart bled for his diſtreſs—ſhe forgot her own.

"I would ſee him once more," ſaid ſhe, "whatever it might coſt me, but in ſeeing him what relief ſhall I afford him? He knows my heart; he knows how I ſuffer with him, if we meet we ſhall enfeeble each other."

Mr. Mordaunt encouraged her to write to him. This was not an eaſy taſk, but ſhe hoped ſome good might ariſe from her letter, and ſhe reſolved to write—After many leſs ſucceſsful efforts, as ſhe thought, ſhe ſent him the following:

"It is a cruel perſecution that you ſubject me to, my dear couſin, why do you force me to appear ſevere and unkind, when I aim only at being juſt and true? The relief that you require from me I have it not in my power to grant, but in the example of obedience that ſeek to ſet you, I offer you all the conſolation that our unhappy circumſtances allow: Aſſure yourſelf I have not read your letters: How harſh it founds to ſay, that while affairs remain as they now are I never will—This is the laſt of my writing that I can addreſs to you. Of all the power that once we might be ſuppoſed to have over each other, that which good-will and friendſhip give alone remains. If you would

would not have me believe that with you I have forfeited even *this*, you will endeavour to make that taſk *eaſy* which I *muſt* perform however *difficult*. I entreat you to leave Northumberland, and if we are ever to meet again, let it be without ſelf reproach on either ſide."

"Adieu, and every bleſſing be your's that attends on virtue; if there were a happineſs apart from rectitude, ſuch is the honeſty of my affection that I could not wiſh it you."

After all, this was a bad letter —— but Ellen was not in circumſtances to write a good one. It was received by Henry with tears of delight and anguiſh. To ſee Ellen's hand writing addreſſed to him, filled his mind with joy, but there were ſome touches in the letter, and more eſpecially the purport of the whole, that ſtung him almoſt to madneſs.— He obſerved that ſhe no longer called him her dear Henry, but her dear couſin, as if the affection ſhe bore him was no longer appropriate to herſelf, but belonged only to the relation he held towards her. The relinquiſhing for ever all power over him but what aroſe from friendſhip and good-will, ſhewed him that ſhe did not wiſh to owe even his compliance with her requeſt, to any more ardent or particular feeling; her earneſtneſs that if ever they met again, they ſhould meet without ſelf-reproach, convinced him of her adherence to her principle, that their preſent ſeparation ought to be conſidered as the termination of their engagement, and that if they were

were again to meet it muſt be only as friends. The intimation that ſhe wiſhed him no happineſs independent of rectitude, he thought pointed out a deſire that he ſhould fully comply with his father's wiſhes. All theſe obſervations filled him with the moſt poignant grief, and the laſt (in which however he was miſtaken) with the moſt lively reſentment. Nothing he now found was to be hoped for from a longer continuance in Northumberland, and he therefore determined to be gone.

He committed to Mrs. Thornton a few lines, which as he aſſured her they were his laſt farewell, ſhe did not ſcruple to receive, and to engage that Ellen ſhould read.——— Thus he wrote.

"I go.—You requeſt it, and I comply. But it is not the cool principle of friendſhip that gives ſuch abſolute power over the mind; it is not a ſenſe of your *good-will* that throws me a vagabond on the world, without an object, without a motive for action, and delivers me up to all its dangers, robbed of the polar ſtar, hope, to direct my courſe. You have withdrawn your beneficial influence, but it is not in your power to withdraw that which may impel me—perhaps to my ruin. They tell me you act nobly—it may be ſo, for you *were* all excellence, but my faculties are too much clouded to diſtinguiſh between right and wrong, and I can feel only your unkindneſs. Heaven ſhield *you* from ſelf-reproach, but for *myſelf!*———"

"Adieu,

"Adieu, adieu, my beloved, my *own* Ellen, appropriated to me by vows, by love!—No, I will not throw you back into the common herd of relations, you who have so long been worn near my inmost soul, the dearest treasure I possessed.——Adieu, and may you soon forget your cousin."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

'Each ſubſtance of a grief hath twenty ſhadows.'

SHAKESPEARE.

THIS letter was the ſevereſt ſtroke Ellen had received.—Its incoherence, the deſpair it manifeſted, gave her an image of Henry's mind that filled her with horror—it made her call in queſtion the rectitude of all ſhe had done—ſhe felt herſelf accountable for any exceſs that Henry might commit, and ſhe knew not that ſhe was exculpated by *any* motive from the guilt of having broken an engagement which had always acted like a charm upon Henry, and preſerved him hitherto in the paths of virtue and prudence. While ſhe believed herſelf right, whatever ſhe ſuffered in being ſo, ſhe retained a ſource of comfort in her own breaſt that calmed her moſt tumultuous paſſions, and lulled her loudeſt griefs; but the ſuppoſition that ſhe was *wrong* deſtroyed this calm, and gave her up to the moſt unmitigated affliction.

She was at one moment inclined to annul all ſhe had done, to declare her adherence to her engagements with Henry, and her deſign to wait till Lord Villars either withdrew his objections, or was no longer able to inforce them;

them: But the conviction that ſhe was influenced to ſuch deſigns rather by the complainings of Henry than by any reaſonings of her own, made her firſt heſitate as to the rectitude of ſuch a ſtep, and then abandon the idea altogether. Sometimes ſhe thought to write to Henry, openly to acknowledge all ſhe ſuffered, and unequivocally to declare that her regards towards him were the ſame as ever; but ſhe conſidered that this was, in fact, to tell him only that, of which he could not doubt, and that as it could not be followed by any yielding of reſolution on her part, it would only ſerve to revive a hope that muſt again be loſt in ſtill bitterer diſappointment; ſhe conſidered farther that as ſhe had declared her renunciation of him to be final, whatever affection ſhe might in ſuch early days of their ſeparation ſtill be allowed to entertain for him, yet that it ought by every paſſing hour to become leſs and leſs, and that therefore ſhe was bound to avoid any profeſſions that might ſeem to promiſe a continuance of this love, or which might encourage him to keep alive in his breaſt a paſſion ſhe had exhorted him to ſacrifice.

On the whole ſhe was convinced that her ſtrength was to ſit ſtill; that ſhe had nothing farther to do but to bear her own burthen with all the patience ſhe could, and by obtruding herſelf as little as poſſible on the memory of Henry, to accelerate that period, when ſhe would be able to look back on the preſent painful tranſactions as on the impreſſions made by a painful dream.

This

This was what the plain ſenſe and the true virtue of Ellen ſuggeſted to her, as the beſt line of conduct ſhe could purſue, and in purſuing it ſhe hoped in time to reap the reward ſhe ſo well deſerved, peace of mind to herſelf: But ſuch quiet forbearance, when exertion would have been ſo flattering to the feelings of her heart, was not without efforts ſo painful, that in the ſtruggle the colour forſook her cheek, ſhe loſt her appetite and reſt, and in ſpite of all her attempts to the contrary, Ellen was but the ghoſt of what ſhe had once been.

In quitting Northumberland, Henry knew not where to go---to go to his father he felt was impoſſible, he had no motive for returning to his chambers, and neither duty or inclination called him elſe where; he was indeed the very vagabond he had deſcribed himſelf to Ellen, and he felt careleſs as to what he did, or what became of him.

From this dreadful dereliction of himſelf, the policy though not the kindneſs of his father relieved him.

Lord Villars had carefully watched him from the time that he had himſelf quitted Groby Manor, and he was hence convinced, that from the preſent ſtate of Henry's mind, nothing favourable to his future hopes was now to be attempted; he ſaw it was neceſſary to regain his influence over him by kindneſs, and to refer to ſome diſtant time the completion of thoſe views that he by no means gave up; he was however aware that even tenderneſs from him at this time would be ſuſ-

pected,

pected, and he therefore employed Lady Villars to ſooth the paſſions of her ſon, and to ſoften his reſentment.

Lady Villars was a perſon of a good heart, but of very little underſtanding; ſhe had always been accuſtomed to the moſt perfect ſubmiſſion to the will of her huſband, by him ſhe had been taught the impoſſibility of allowing their eldeſt ſon, to connect himſelf witha woman of no fortune, and the conſequent ruin of their family if he did ſo; this idea was by habit become ſo ſtrong, that ſhe could as eaſily have changed her nature as have abandoned it, ſhe therefore looked upon the ſeparation of Ellen and Henry as unavoidable, but ſhe did not therefore look upon it with leſs pity, and ſhe thought that every thing ought to be done that could make their ſacrifice eaſy to them; that in time they would each be happy aſunder ſhe had no doubt, but ſhe wiſhed time to be given them. Lord Villars, from leſs kind motives, was of the ſame opinion;—he engaged Lady Villars to write to her ſon, aſſuring him of the tender concern that both ſhe and his father took in his happineſs, praiſing him for the compliance he had ſhewn to their wiſhes, and promiſing him that no other woman ſhould be offered to his acceptance, 'till the remembrance of paſt connexions were obliterated. From herſelf ſhe invited him to join her inſtantly at the park, from whence his father was abſent, expreſſing an anxious deſire to ſee him, and aſſuring him he ſhould ſee nobody there that he did not wiſh to ſee: This concluſion was meant

meant to point to Lady Almeria, and it was ſo underſtood by Henry.

On the receipt of this letter, he felt himſelf irreſiſtibly drawn towards his mother—her tenderneſs he had always experienced, and it was peculiarly tempting at this inſtant, when he felt abandoned by the whole world; he hoped too, from the facility of her underſtanding, to be able to perſuade her of the injuſtice there was in his giving up Ellen, and he knew, from the purity of her principles, that what ſhe believed to be unjuſt ſhe would never think eligible.

He repaired therefore immediately to the park, and found, from the tenderneſs of Lady Villar all the conſolation that he had hoped; but he was diſappointed in his expectation of drawing her over to his ſide. Of the juſtice or injuſtice of the matter, ſhe declared herſelf incompetent to judge, but ſhe knew it was impoſſible he ſhould marry a woman without fortune; and what it was impoſſible to avoid, however grievous, it was neceſſary to endure.

Thus, from the ſhortneſs of capacity in his mother, and the obdurate ambition of his father, Henry found he muſt give up all hopes of redreſs to his wrongs, or relief from his miſeries.

Lord Villars had conducted Lady Almeria to an eſtate ſhe had in Devonſhire, and had left her under the care of an aunt who was left joint guardian with himſelf. He had left her with an aſſurance that a few months would obliterate

obliterate all traces of Ellen from the breaſt of Henry, and that twelve months would not paſs before they ſaw the full completion of her wiſhes. He expected by thus keeping up her hopes, that he could preſerve her conſtancy, and that though the period might be ſtretched much beyond that he predicted, that ſhe would be in no haſte to form any other connexion; to leſſen the danger of her doing ſo, he recommended to her aunt, that ſhe ſhould paſs the coming winter in Devonſhire, and he engaged that lady Villars, himſelf, and ſon, ſhould viſit her there.

Having thus provided as much as circumſtances admitted, for the ſecurity of his prize, he purpoſely moved from place to place, avoiding the meeting with his ſon 'till he learnt from Lady Villars, that though he ſeemed to have ſunk into a deep melancholy his reſentment appeared to have ſubſided, and that ſhe thought they might now meet with advantage to both ſides.

Lord Villars on this intimation, went immediately to the park, and by the moſt winning addreſs, and the kindeſt manners, ſtrove to regain the confidence, and awaken the dormant affection of his ſon. He ſpoke to him of Ellen, and always in the moſt flattering terms; ſcarcely ſeemed leſs hurt than Henry that ſo much merit ſhould be loſt to them, and deplored the neceſſity (upon the ſtrength of which he always took care to dwell) that ſeparated them; of any farther choice he gave no hint, ſaving that he ſometimes ſaid, that with the ſingle qualification

of

of fortune provided for, the whole female ſex lay before him.

To the kindneſs of a parent, however ſuſpicious, Henry could not be long inſenſible. He felt it as a balm to his wounds, and was ſometimes ſo far ſeduced by it, as to hope that in time his father might relent; he wiſhed therefore for every reaſon to preſerve the good underſtanding between them, and Ellen had ſoon the conſolation of hearing that they appeared upon the beſt terms together; the inference indeed that it was natural to draw from ſuch information, would not perhaps have been very conſoling to any mind leſs true and diſintereſted than Ellen's;——but in having given up Henry to a ſenſe of duty, ſhe had made no reſervation whatever, ſhe meant wholly and for ever to give him up; and in this circumſtance ſhe found no comfort ſo ſoothing to her heart, as to know that he began to recover his peace of mind, and to reſume the path of duty and obedience; it would lead him ultimately, ſhe doubted not, to marriage with ſome woman of his father's choice, and ſhe offered up no other prayer, when this idea occurred, but that ſhe might alſo be ſo much the choice of Henry as to ſecure his happineſs.

It was not indeed before ſhe wanted it that this comfort reached her. The impreſſion his letter had made upon her feelings ſhe had found it impoſſible to efface; her mind was equal to any exertion, but her conſtitution ſunk under that which ſhe made to appear eaſy and

and cheerful, while her heart was torn by the moſt excruciating fears for the happineſs and good conduct of Henry.

Mr. Mordaunt ſaw, with the extremeſt anxiety, her increaſing thinneſs, her loſs of colour, and a kind of feebleneſs that ſeemed creeping over all her faculties; and he felt, with ſomething like diſappointment, that he thought he ſaw even Ellen unequal to the taſk of riſing ſuperior to an unfortunately placed paſſion. Ellen had felt that there was ſo much to condemn in Henry's letter, that ſhe had carefully concealed its contents from every creature. Mr. Mordaunt knew not therefore the real ſpring from whence her bittereſt ſorrow flowed, and imputing her ſorrows wholly to diſappointed love, he ſaw, with ſurpriſe, an improvement take place both in her looks and ſpirits, from the moment ſhe knew Henry was living in his father's houſe, and that they were friends together.

He ventured diſtantly to try her on this ſubject, and to probe her feelings, to ſee how far ſhe could endure Henry's marriage with another:——She underſtood him, and replied with the moſt perfect openneſs.

"My heart is lightened of its only intolerable weight, now I am aſſured that Henry is in the road of duty——All the ſorrows that belong to myſelf I know I can bear, and, in time ſubdue. I look for Henry's marriage! I acknowledge that my anxiety on the ſubject will be great, but when I releaſed him from his engagements with me, it was for the ex-

preſs purpoſe of his forming new ones with another.

Mr. Mordaunt could only claſp Ellen to his heart, and call her what he thought her, the moſt rational of her ſex.

From this time Mr. Mordaunt ſaw a viſible improvement take place daily in Ellen: But to ſuppoſe that a perfect cure could be wrought while ſhe continued at Groby Manor, where every object reminded her of Henry, ſeemed as unreaſonable as to expect that eaſe ſhould be reſtored to a perſon while ſtill bound to the rack. Mr. Mordaunt felt that ſhe called for every aſſiſtance poſſible for her to receive, and however inconvenient it might be with regard to pecuniary conſiderations, he determined, with his family, to ſpend part of the enſuing winter at Bath.

Ellen received the propoſal with the gratitude it called for——She knew the reluctance that ſhe felt to quit Groby Manor, was an unfavorable ſymptom, and ſhe hoped change of place might indeed contribute towards making her more the perſon ſhe wiſhed to be, than ſhe felt ſhe was at preſent.

Henry in the meanwhile remained at the park, a prey to the moſt tormenting diſquietude; not able to reſign his wiſhes, and every day ſeeing leſs and leſs reaſon to hope their gratification.

Lord Villars obſerved that on the part of Henry there appeared nothing like a return to cheerfulneſs, and he began to ſuſpect, that ſo far from intending to get the better of his paſſion for Ellen, he ſecretly nouriſhed it, and

that

that having reſolved to keep himſelf free from every other engagement, he looked forward to the time when his father's death would ſet him at liberty to follow his own inclination. The no-marriage of Henry was nearly as detrimental to Lord Villars's family views, as his marriage with a woman of no fortune, and he dreaded ſeeing his ſon confirmed in ſentiments that he knew it would be beyond any ſtretch of his power to overthrow. He had indeed, gueſſed pretty nearly the ſtate of Henry's mind; ſomething, much reſembling the above plan, was forming itſelf ſtrongly into a reſolution, except that not daring to date his happineſs from his father's death, he had ſubſtituted in idea the vague term of ſome diſtant period, though well his reaſon aſſured him, that no period, however diſtant, during his father's life, could unite him, with his conſent, to Ellen.

Having in ſome meaſure fixed his own plan, the thought that moſt tormented him aroſe from the apprehenſion that Ellen might be induced to connect herſelf with another. It was this fear that had made him ſo ſtrenuous to draw from her a promiſe, that ſhe would preſerve her heart for him; her refuſal had nearly diſtracted him, and the dread that her yielding might make all his conſtancy vain, ſtill continued to overwhelm his mind, with the deepeſt gloom.

Lord Villars knew that though by his power he had ſeparated Henry and Ellen, he could proceed no farther: To oblige Henry to take another wife, was what he could not do; and

he now ſaw, that it was only from the change time might make in the inclinations of Henry that he could hope the compleat ſucceſs of his deſigns. To keep him in the country, brooding over his diſappointment, and indulging in romantic plans of everlaſting conſtancy, was not the way to accelerate this change, he therefore caught eagerly at a wiſh, ſlightly expreſſed by Henry, that he might be allowed to go for ſome time to his chambers in town—to town therefore he went, and Lord Villars employed every art to draw him from the gloom of Lincoln's-Inn to the haunts of gaiety and amuſement. He had the ſatisfaction to hear, that his ſchemes were not wholly unſucceſsful.

After ſome time ſpent ſullenly alone, Henry began to regain his cheerfulneſs, to aſſociate with the young and the diſſipated, and to be once again the delight of his companions; he now ſtood on a precipice, and in the wreck of his love and happineſs his principles and his virtue were well nigh involved.

But to the miſchiefs to which the mercenary views of a parent expoſed him, he was preſerved by his paſſion for a virtuous woman, from whom that parent wiſhed to ſever him for ever. The miſery of his mind when alone drove him into company, nor was it the ſtill voice of rational converſe, or the quiet complacence of domeſtic ſcenes that could overcome the louder note of grief that ſpake within, or controul the contending paſſions that were boiling in his breaſt: Paſſion muſt be

be oppoſed to paſſion, the feſtive roar of laughter, the diſſonant bray of Bacchus, were alone ſufficiently powerful to overcome the ſenſe he retained of his diſappointment, no wonder if in ſuch company, with a mind ſo diſordered, his

'Pulſe's maddening play,
'Wild ſent him pleaſure's devious way,
'Miſled by fancy's meteor ray,
'By paſſion driv'n.'——

Who does not tremble for Henry? One ſtep beyond where now he ſtood, and he had fallen, not to riſe again but through the rugged paths of penitence and remorſe.

But the words in Ellen's letter, "if ever we meet again let us meet free from ſelf reproach," had never departed from his memory:——— To meet again, to meet again as allowably dear to each other, as they had once been, was a hope ſo interwoven with his very exiſtence, that he felt, life and it muſt expire together; but to meet her unworthy of her, was a miſery beyond any he had yet known: to loſe her by his own fault he knew would be diſtraction, and ſtarting from the idea with horror, he reſolved to quit a life where every moment teemed with temptations which he could not yield to without entailing on himſelf the ſevereſt ſelf reproach.

However reſolute he might be to avoid vice, he yet found that diſſipation of ſome

kind was neceſſary to a mind, ſo cruelly thwarted in its favorite views as his was, and all its plans for the happineſs of every lowering hour thus deranged.

He determined to ſeek this diſſipation abroad, where, even from amuſement he might draw inſtruction, and where, while he diverted his melancholy, he might cultivate his underſtanding.

He applied to Lord Villars for permiſſion to leave England, and received a ready compliance with his wiſhes. Lord Villars, however, earneſtly deſired to ſee him firſt, and Henry haſtened down into Hampſhire. Lord Villars had artfully ſent off Lady Villars into Devonſhire before his arrival, and when Henry aſked for his mother, he was told where ſhe was, and that ſhe was ſo much indiſpoſed that ſhe could not travel into Hampſhire to ſee him, and ſtill leſs could ſhe ſuffer him to quit England without bidding him adieu.

Henry ſaw the trap, but firm in his own conſtancy, he did not fear any conſequence, that could be drawn from his viſiting a ſick parent in Lady Almeria's houſe; he therefore readily accompanied his father into Devonſhire, and when there, he ſought, by a ſtudied coldneſs towards Lady Almeria, to evince to every body that it was only a parent that he did viſit.

Lady Almeria was however young and handſome, and ſhe ſhewed him ſo flattering a preference, that Henry, who was no anchoret,

choret, found it impoſſible to maintain his reſerve.

Lady Almeria was a little giddy-brain, who either felt or cared for no conſequence, let her ſay or do what ſhe would; ſhe laughed and romped with Henry, rallied his grave airs, talked of her own paſſion, boaſted the conſtancy with which ſhe would wait his return, and ſeemed ſo ſure of her paſſion being anſwered, that it was impoſſible to tell her ſhe was miſtaken: Henry was amuſed, and perhaps flattered by all this, but his heart was only the more immoveably attached to Ellen; for who could have thought of exchanging her for Lady Almeria? His ſpirits received great improvement from his ſojourn in Devonſhire, but he quitted England without having wavered for a moment in his reſolution, of having no other wife but Ellen.

Lord Villars ſaw enough, during Henry's viſit into Devonſhire, to raiſe his hopes; but he alſo ſaw that while Ellen remained unmarried, they probably would never be fulfilled; her marriage, therefore, became a point with him, and he employed his ſiſter to bring this about if poſſible.

Ellen ſoon learnt, from her mother, the viſit Henry had made in Devonſhire, and ſhe learnt it under all the exaggerated form that malicious miſrepreſentation can give. In the pain that Ellen felt, at this information, ſhe acknowledged the little progreſs that ſhe had made in driving Henry from her heart, but even here her pain was not wholly ſelfiſh; in

the character of Lady Almeria ſhe ſaw nothing that could make Henry happy, and again ſhe felt accountable for his loſs of happineſs, as ſhe had before done for his probable loſs of rectitude.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

'I ſuppoſe him virtuous,
'In voices well divulged, free, learn'd, and valliant;
'And in dimenſion, and the ſhape of nature,
'A gracious perſon.'

SHAKESPEARE.

THE whole Mordaunt family had now been ſome months at Bath; Ellen had impoſed upon herſelf to partake of all the amuſements of the place, ſhe therefore refuſed no amuſement that was offered her. The mornings were ſpent at breakfaſts, and the evenings in balls. But a way of life ſo little ſuited either to her preſent inclinations, or to her habits, exhauſted both her mind and body, and ſhe was often compelled, from wearineſs and indiſpoſition, to remain at home.

At home indeed ſhe never failed of paſſing the hours extremely to her ſatisfaction. Her mother and ſiſters were conſtantly engaged, and her father as conſtantly at leiſure, but he was ſeldom alone; and his ſociety and that of his friends, was much more ſuited to Ellen's

diſpoſition, than any, that in the preſent ſtate of her heart and ſpirits ſhe met with in public.

Sir William Ackland was amongſt the moſt conſtant of her father's viſitors, and it ſoon became evident that he was not the leſs ſo from his being now, from her increaſed indiſpoſition, almoſt ſure to meet Ellen in her father's drawing-room.

Sir William Ackland was one and forty, but he united to an uncommonly elegant and youthful looking perſon, the poliſhed manners of a man who had lived much in the world; he had paſſed many years of his life abroad, was a man of ſenſe and obſervation, and particularly excelled in the art of converſation; when ſilent there was ſomething auſtere in his countenance and manner, but when he ſpoke the gloom diſperſed, and he appeared all gaiety and good humour. His fortune was ample, and it was underſtood amongſt his acquaintance, that he was reſolved to ſettle in England and marry.

It was apparent from Sir William's firſt knowledge of Ellen, that he watched her attentively, but he ſeemed rather to ſtudy her character than to be in love with her perſon. Ellen ſaw, in Sir William Ackland, nothing but an agreeable friend of her father's; his converſation pleaſed her, and unconſcious of his deſigns, and without any herſelf, ſhe converſed with him with a freedom and unreſerve which ſoon diſplayed the ſtores of her under-

underſtanding and the goodneſs of her heart.

This freedom was not checked on the part of Sir William, by any attentions that could obtrude the idea of a lover upon her fancy, ſhe ſaw him every day the ſame, polite, obliging, and friendly; but though Henry, Ellen's prototype of love, was all there, he was ſo much more, that it was impoſſible that Ellen ſhould believe effects ſo different ſhould ſpring from the ſame cauſe; it never once occurred to her that Sir William ſought her for a wife, and had ſhe been conſulted on the ſubject, ſhe would have thought her eldeſt ſiſter more ſuited to the ſtation.

But this was not the opinion either of Sir William or of Mr. Mordaunt. The latter thought he ſaw, in an union with Sir William Ackland, an aſylum for Ellen from all the ill humour of her mother; in the opulence of Sir William's fortune he believed was ſecured to Ellen a never failing ſource of the indulgence of her benevolence, and he thought her ſituation, as his wife, would call into action all the powers of her underſtanding, and all the virtues of her heart. All the enquiries he could make into the character of Sir William were anſwered favourably; and though thro' his long abſence from England, he was not intimately known to any body, he was univerſally ſpoken of as a man of a liberal mind, integrity and virtuous diſpoſitions; it ſoon, therefore became the favourite wiſh of Mr. Mordaunt, to ſee Ellen united with Sir William Ackland, but as he was aware the more

time

time elapſed before the propoſal was made, the more likely it was to ſucceed; all the efforts that he made were rather to retard than to bring it on.

Ellen had, however, an open and profeſſed lover. He alſo was a Baronet, a ſtout hale man of fifty, who, with a good conſtitution, and two thouſand pounds a year, declared he wanted nothing but a young wife, and an heir to his eſtate. Ellen laughed both at his wants and his wiſhes, nor did ſhe conceive it poſſible that any body ſhould treat his pretenſions more ſeriouſly.

But if Mr. Mordaunt deſired Sir William Ackland for his ſon-in-law, Mrs. Mordaunt had not leſs earneſtly fixed her mind upon Sir John Sinclair. By marrying Ellen to him, ſhe would fulfil the taſk Lord Villars had given her to perform, and by giving ſuch an huſband to Ellen, ſhe would gratify the never ceaſing diſlike ſhe entertained towards her. For a girl with fifteen hundred pounds to her fortune, to refuſe ſuch an eſtabliſhment, appeared to her madneſs, and poor Ellen was obliged to be very ſerious in a matter that appeared highly ridiculous to her.

Her ſteady refuſal of ſuch honors drew upon her from her mother, ſo much reproach and obloquy, as made her life compleatly wretched. Sir William Ackland carefully obſerved all the family proceedings in this matter, and he was not more pleaſed to remark that pecuniary advantage alone would not diſpoſe of Ellen, than he was with the

mildneſs

mildneſs with which ſhe endured all the ill treatment her oppoſition to her mother's unreaſonable deſires occaſioned her. He wiſhed indeed to ſee how ſhe would conduct herſelf to a younger lover, for there was ſomething in the ridicule with which, while the affair continued a laughing matter in the family, ſhe had treated the notion of Sir John Sinclair's thinking himſelf a ſuitable huſband for her, that had preſſed rather unpleaſantly upon ſome of Sir William's feelings; nor were his wiſhes long ungratified.

Amongſt the numerous partners whom the fortune of the dance had conſigned to Ellen, there was one young man, who being juſt come to his eſtate, and maſter of himſelf, imagined that the firſt woman he liked to flirt with, was the one with whom he could be happy for life; he made love with the ſame eaſe he would have made tea, and received Ellen's refuſal with the ſame non-chalance as he had made his propoſal. As he wanted neither ſenſe or money, was handſome and full as well bred as moſt of the young men of the age, there was no very oſtenſible reaſon for the peremptorineſs of Ellen's negative.

It had been ſufficient with her that he did not raiſe one emotion of any kind in her mind, and that marriage was the thing leaſt in her thoughts, and her wiſhes; but the talkers around her ſought for ſome leſs ſimple cauſe, to account for a young woman of ſmall fortune, refuſing to ſettle herſelf advantageouſly in the world, with many it was imputed to her

her deſign of becoming Lady Sinclair, but Sir William knew that this was not the caſe ;— others averred that ſhe had fixed her hopes and deſigns upon Sir William himſelf, and this Sir William ſeltnot at all diſpoſed to queſtion, he was complimented by ſo many upon his conqueſt that he began to perſuade himſelf, (what cannot love and vanity perſuade a man to ?) that if ſhe refuſed the rich and the young, it was becauſe his merit had penetrated her heart. The complaiſance and attention with which ſhe always liſtened to him, and the ſuperiority that his perſonal attractions and outward manners gave him over all the other men who approached her, made this no very extraordinary or unpardonable miſtake: On this miſtake he grounded his reſolution of explaining himſelf to Mr. Mordaunt.

The ſpring was now far advanced, and the family were to quit Bath in leſs than a fortnight, Sir William therefore wiſhed, before he loſt ſight of them, to leave no doubt of his future intentions. He accordingly opened his heart to Mr. Mordaunt, but he repreſented to him that being only a few weeks returned to England, he had much buſineſs to adjuſt before he could enter into matrimony: he therefore propoſed to arrange his affairs, to viſit his country reſidence, and afterwards, if Mr. Mordaunt encouraged him to hope, he flattered himſelf he might be allowed to pay his devoirs to Ellen, in Northumberland.

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt received Sir William's declaration with manifeſt pleaſure, and with the frankneſs that diſtinguiſhed his character, immediately informed him of the attachment that had ſubſiſted between Ellen and Henry; he repreſented the caſe exactly as it was, and aſſured Sir William, that he had no doubt but that Ellen's mind grew every day more free from every remains of predilection in her couſin's favor, but he gave it as his opinion, that as Sir William muſt of neceſſity be ſome weeks before he could openly declare himſelf, it might be productive of good effects if he deferred his intended viſit into Northumberland 'till the autumn; in the mean time Mr. Mordaunt promiſed to obſerve the inclinations of his daughter, and to deal with perfect fairneſs in the repreſentations he ſhould make of them from time to time, to Sir William.

Mr. Mordaunt, who could not conceive that a man, who had paſſed his fortieth year, could expect a young woman, not yet twenty, to have fallen in love with him, or that it was probable that ſhe ſhould not have had ſome attachment or prepoſſeſſion more ſuited to her years, had no ſuſpicion that by the frankneſs of his dealing he pierced Sir William's heart with the moſt ſenſible diſappointment, and opened it in future to all the tortures of rage and jealouſy.

This prior love of Ellen's explained in a way not at all flattering to Sir William's vanity, her indifference to the riches of Sir John Sinclair, and the youth of Mr. Bowden, and

if he were to hope it were to be overcome in his favour, he found he was to owe his better fortune rather to time, and perhaps to the recommendation of a parent, intereſted in his behalf, than to his own merit.

The chagrin that he felt on this diſcovery made him readily come into Mr. Mordaunt's propoſal, that any farther declaration ſhould be delayed, and he deſigned to quit Bath without again ſeeing Ellen, accident however prevented this. Going to viſit Mr. Mordaunt one evening, when he had underſtood ſhe was to be at the ball, he found her in the drawing-room, and ſhe appeared, from the accidental mode of her dreſs, or from ſome other cauſe, more attractive in her manner and appearance, than he had ever before thought her.

"I feared," ſaid he, the moment he ſaw her, "that you were to have been at the ball."

"Then I am not to flatter myſelf," ſaid ſhe gaily, "that this viſit is to me?"

"Should you think it flattering if it were ſo?"

"I am not ſure I ſhould call it flattering, but I am ſure I ſhould call it very pleaſant."

There was a naïvette and truth in theſe words, that went to Sir William's heart.

"If I am not to be the firſt man ſhe has loved," ſaid he to himſelf, "I may be the ſecond; and if from this moment I might be the only one, I ſhould be happy."

In

In this night's converſation Mr. Mordaunt was wholly forgotten, and Sir William's attentions and admiration were ſo apparent, that Ellen could not help ſeeing him in a light he had never appeared to her in before. When he was gone, Mr. Mordaunt ventured to rally Ellen on her conqueſt, and ſhe replied with ſo much praiſe of Sir William, that Mr. Mordaunt thought himſelf in poſſeſſion of his wiſhes.

The effect this evening had upon Sir William was ſuch, that inſtead of leaving Bath at the time he deſigned, he continued there till the laſt moment of Mr. Mordaunt's ſtay, and ſpent ſo many hours in his houſe, and with Ellen, that ſhe could not doubt, but, that at leaſt for the preſent, ſhe had found the way to his heart. This was a diſcovery that certainly gave her no pleaſure, but neither did it excite much pain, or give her any very lively alarm: There was ſomething ſo guarded even in the admiration that Sir William expreſſed, as eaſily perſuaded Ellen, who had no vanity to counteract her wiſhes, that he thought not of her as a wife, and that when once out of ſight ſhe ſhould be thought of no more. It was, however with great ſatisfaction, that ſhe ſaw herſelf removed from Bath, and the ſight of Groby Manor made her heart throb with delight. "Here," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "I ſhall find an aſylum from all gallantry, in thoſe ſhades there will be no concert but the concert of the birds, no dancing but the quivering of the leaves."

She

She flew to the parſonage.

"My friends," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe embraced firſt one and then the other, "I have not known ſo happy a moment as this ſince we parted."

Her return to Groby Manor ſeemed to give her new life, and, unknown to herſelf, the eſcape ſhe thought ſhe had had from Sir William Ackland diffuſed peace and cheerfulneſs over her mind.

She reſumed all her occupations with a ſpirit ſhe had not experienced ſince her loſs of Henry; and Mr. Mordaunt thought himſelf authorized in giving Sir William the moſt flattering accounts of her diſpoſitions.

Ellen had, however, one continual cauſe for unhappineſs, which neither her reaſon or her patience could preſerve her from feeling——this was the increaſed ill humour of her mother. Baffled in her ſcheme of marrying her, perſuaded that Ellen in ſecret meant to preſerve herſelf for Henry, her reſentment and malice towards her knew no bounds; there was no one moment of the day when ſhe did not make her feel the fangs of her malevolence; all Mr. Mordaunt's authority could not ſhield Ellen from the ſtorm; the tongue is an inſtrument of evil that cannot be reſtrained: Bitter taunts, and ſevere reproaches, may be reſented, but cannot when we are compelled to live with the tormentor, be avoided. Ellen's duplicity and preſumption were the continual topics of her mother's diſcourſe, and with theſe ſhe took care to mingle the moſt confident aſſurances that all would

would prove vain, and that Henry would return to England only to marry Lady Almeria.

From ſuch attacks Ellen took refuge whenever ſhe could at the parſonage, but they made Mr. Mordaunt more and more impatient to ſee her, under the protection of a man of worth, and to have her prove by her marriage, the falſeneſs of Mrs. Mordaunt's calumnies.

Sir William grew impatient to viſit Northumberland, and Mr. Mordaunt determined to delay his conſent no longer than till he had opened the matter fully to Ellen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

'My once dear love! hopeleſs that I no more
'Muſt call thee ſo—the rich affection's ſtore
'That fed on hopes, lies now exhauſt and ſpent,
'Like ſums of treaſure unto bankrupts lent:
'We that did nothing ſtudy, but the way
'To love each other, with which thoughts the day
'Roſe with delight to us, and with them ſet,
'Muſt learn the hateful art how to forget.
'Yet
'Witneſs the chaſte deſires that never broke
'Into unruly heats,
'Tis no default in thee, I dare acquit
'Thy maiden faith, thy purpoſe fair and white
'As thy pure ſelf.

KING.

ONE day, when Mrs. Mordaunt had been more than commonly injurious, Ellen had withdrawn herſelf to her favorite wood, and had juſt eaſed her ſwelling heart by a flood of tears, when her father, who had purpoſely followed her from the houſe, joined her——ſhe would have concealed her emotion.

"My dear Ellen," ſaid he, "your mother deſerves no delicacy from you; do not, for her ſake, deprive me of your full confidence, the

the ſympathy of one parent is but a due compenſation for the cruelty of another."

"Your kindneſs, my father," ſaid the weeping Ellen, "is a compenſation for every evil, and I ought to bear injuries that I have not deſerved, with more fortitude."

"I ought to remove you from the preſſure of ſuch injuries, and I would do ſo too, even at the hazard of never ſeeing my wife again, did I not hope a more amicable end to all your oppreſſions, and ſuch a one as will give the lie direct to all your mother's unjuſt imputations."

Ellen regarded her father with a look of timid ſurpriſe.

"What do you mean, Sir?"

"Your marriage with a man of worth will ſecure your own happineſs, and prove beyond all diſpute, the ſincerity and good faith of that renunciation, the motives for which are not ſo daily called in queſtion.

"My marriage!" repeated Ellen faintly.

"I want no further proof," cried Mr. Mordaunt warmly, "of the ſtrength of your mind, and the purity of your principles: I know that the ſacrifice you appeared to make was ſincere, that you never looked to futurity for an indemnification for preſent loſſes, and I ſee, with equal pleaſure and admiration, that you are capable of receiving happineſs from another ſource than that which is dried up to you for ever. It is not, my love, that I am putting your honeſty to the teſt, but it is that I think I am offering a reward to your virtues,

tues, when I talk to you of other connexions, when I name marriage."

"Marriage?" again repeated Ellen.

"Were your home as happy as I could wish to make it, yet marriage would be desirable. Half the female virtues fade, or are useless, except in marriage. You are formed to adorn them all, and having suffered as a daughter, it is proper you should be rewarded as a wife."

"As a wife?" said Ellen.

"As a wife, my love; nor can I believe that with a man whom you could love there is any thing very dreadful in the name of wife. Sir William Ackland seeks and deserves your love; in giving you to him I believe I secure your happiness, and have I not observed that he is not disagreeable to you?"

"Disagreeable! no, certainly."

"His person, his conversation pleases you, you think him worthy, amiable?"

"Yes."

"You are not unconscious that he admires you?"

"No."

"It would not be ungrateful to you that he should love you?"

Ellen was silent.

"Dear Ellen, why these monosyllables? Why this silence?"

Ellen gasped for breath; Mr. Mordaunt took her hand, it was cold.

"You are ill?"

"No, I am better." And throwing herself into her father's arms, she burst into tears. "Dear Sir, forgive me, I will not be less all

you

you wiſh me, notwithſtanding theſe fooliſh tears."

"They are not tears of reluctance, Ellen? I mean not to diſtreſs you; you are and ſhall be miſtreſs of yourſelf."

"It muſt come to this. I knew it would come to this! I will not abuſe your indulgence. But leave me, dear Sir, leave me: In two hours I will tell you what I think I can do, what I believe I ought to do."

"I will leave you, my love, but do nothing merely becauſe you think I wiſh it, let the reaſons why I wiſh it have their weight, but not the wiſh itſelf."

"Impoſſible! your wiſh muſt be a motive with me."

Mr. Mordaunt retired, and Ellen haſtened as faſt as her trembling limbs would carry her to the parſonage. She found the little family aſſembled in that woodbine bower where ſo many happy hours of her childhood had been paſſed, where ſhe had ſo often ſtudied and ſo often idled with Henry, where ſhe had a hundred times received his vows of everlaſting love, and where ſhe had as often promiſed never to forſake him. The recollection was too painful; ſhe ſtopt ſhort, her limbs failed her, Mr. Thornton caught her in his arms, and then giving her a glaſs of water, ſhe reſted her head on Mr. Thornton's ſhoulder, and was ſaved by tears from fainting.

Mr. and Mrs. Thornton hung over her with true parental affection, terrified with an emotion they had never witneſſed in her before,

fore, yet afraid to increaſe her diſtreſs by inquiring into the cauſe.

Mary, as much alarmed, and leſs conſiderate, cried, "Dear, dear Ellen, what's the matter? Who now has done you wrong?"

"No one; myſelf I think; I did not think I ſhould have been ſo overcome, I meant to have been quite calm."

"But what, what is the matter?"

"Oh! my friends, you muſt adviſe me, yet, already I know what I ought to do."

"Sir William Ackland would marry you?" interrupted Mary.

"My poor Ellen," ſaid Mr. Thornton.

"My dear Sir, my ſecond father," ſaid Ellen, looking up to Mr. Thornton, "you ſhall be my caſuiſt, you ſhall decide for me; what you determine will be right and good."

"Dear Ellen, you have decided yourſelf. What is eligible, what tends to your happineſs nobody can doubt. The queſtion is, what can you do?"

"I *can* do that which you adviſe me to do."

"Sir William is pleaſant to your fancy, and approved of by your underſtanding; he is amiable, he is kind, plain ſenſe requires no other qualifications in the object of affection."

"But if the heart is not free?" ſaid Mary.

"Will Ellen make that plea?" ſaid Mr. Thornton.

"No, if my heart is not yet Sir William Ackland's, I mean not to reſerve it for another."

"What is the heart but the power of beſtowing the affections where there is merit enough

enough to deſerve them? Does not Sir William Ackland poſſeſs that merit? And where can you look for married happineſs with better hopes of ſucceſs than with him?"

"No where I believe."

"You are above the romantic notion of living ſingle all your life, from having experienced one diſappointment; a notion, to ſay nothing of the falſe and ſelfiſh principles upon which it is grounded, that is uſually attended by a much ſeverer ſenſe of diſappointment than any occaſioned by the events that gave birth to it."

"I hope I am, I have always diſdained ſuch anotion."

"Have you one objection that you would wiſh to act from, to an union with Sir William?"

"No."

"Then, my dear Ellen," ſaid Mr. Thornton, embracing her, "the queſtion is decided. And if Sir William is the man you and Mr. Mordaunt deſcribe him to be, your happineſs is alſo decided, no retroſpect will ever diſturb it."

"I am willing to think ſo, but I miſtruſt myſelf; the emotion I have but now betrayed ——"

"If I ſaw you inſenſible I ſhould be leſs ſure of your happineſs, but the ſame ſentiments that formed your firſt attachment, will form your ſecond: It is upon Sir William's merits and your power of appreciating thoſe merits that I ground my aſſurance of your happineſs: Your affection for him will fill the

preſent void in your heart, will give a motive for action, and an intereſt to duty. If you have thought it poſſible for thoſe who have loſt you to be happy in a ſecond choice, you will not be able to ſuppoſe you cannot be ſo, without making yourſelf too much, or too little of a compliment."

Ellen had nothing to reply to this, but turning to Mrs. Thornton ſaid, "And you, my dear mother, do you ratify this ſentence?"

"Indeed I do, it is the dictate of good ſenſe and good principles; high treaſon I allow againſt the laws of romance, but when did you ever refer your actions to that fantaſtical code?"

"Never, thanks to you, my beſt friend, and now I think I may engage I never ſhall."

"I long to know Sir William," ſaid Mr. Thornton.

"He will meet with your approbation I have no doubt."

"Then muſt he have more than common merit, leſs will not ſatisfy me, when I am looking for a huſband for you."

Ellen faintly ſmiled, and aſking Mary, whoſe ſilence had marked her diſſatisfaction, to accompany her home, ſaid ſhe had promiſed, on parting with her father, to ſee him again in two hours.

"Heaven bleſs you, my dear child," ſaid Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, both in a breath, and Mr. Thornton added, "if moderation and rationality were to be perſonified, they would take no other form than Ellen's."

Ellen's

Ellen's heart was full, ſhe preſſed her hands between her's, and ſcarcely uttering 'adieu,' walked along with Mary.

Mary had much in her mind, but of all that was there ſhe was not able to utter a ſyllable. Ellen talked of the ſoftneſs of the evening, the fragrance of the woodbines, and the melody of the birds: Mary could neither ſmell nor hear. Ellen changed the ſubject, and inquired concerning the laſt new book ſhe had read, and whether the colours in her flower-piece ſtood. Mary could bear no more.

"Oh! Ellen," cried ſhe, throwing her arms around her, "I could not do as you do."

"You could if you would. What your father ſaid was unanſwerable; my judgment is thoroughly with him."

"And is it a matter of judgment?"

"Aſſuredly: What but our judgment ſhall correct the miſtakes of our hearts?"

"I can eaſily excuſe my judgment that office, I hope it will never be called to it."

"You will be the happier. But, educated as you and I have been, in the ſame ſchool, in the ſame circumſtances, I have no doubt, but our conduct would be the ſame."

"It is eaſier to admire than to imitate you. All Ariſtotle's pupils were not Alexanders."

Mr. Mordaunt, in whoſe breaſt Ellen's agitation had raiſed the moſt painful apprehenſions, had counted every moment ſince ſhe quitted him, with the moſt anxious impatience, and no longer able to wait quietly her return, he had bent his ſteps towards the parſonage, he met Ellen and Mary: From

the firſt glance of Ellen's eye he learnt all he wiſhed to know. "A bleſſing will follow all you do, my dear Ellen," ſaid he, "for all you do is founded upon good ſenſe and propriety."

"If I am right in your eyes, and not ſelf-condemned, I know not that there is any thing more in this world to be wiſhed for," ſaid Ellen.

"You have indeed laid the beſt foundation for happineſs, and I entertain not a doubt but the ſuperſtructure will be all our moſt anxious love can deſire."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

'Wiſdom is his, and his alone, who knows
'His heart's uneaſy diſcord to compoſe;
'In gen'rous love of other's good to find,
'The ſweeteſt pleaſures of the ſocial mind;
'To bound his wiſhes to their proper ſphere,
'To nouriſh pleaſing hope, and conquer anxious fear.

LYTTLETON.

SIR WILLIAM received Mr. Mordaunt's ſummons to Groby Manor with a mixture of the moſt lively pleaſure, and the moſt tormenting ſolicitude: He could not doubt of Ellen's determination in his favor, but he doubted the motives that had produced it. He had began his attentions to her by a ſcrupulous weighing of her merits and blemiſhes, and he had ended with the moſt decided and ardent paſſion. To be happy, he muſt be beloved, be beloved preferably, and almoſt excluſively. To be leſs than all to Ellen, was, in Sir William's mind, to be little more than nothing. His vanity could ſcarcely hope, or his reaſon deſire this; and yet leſs than this would by him, before marriage be lamented as a misfortune, and after marriage be puniſhed as a fault.

He haſted down into Northumberland oppreſſed by doubt, yet too much in love to be diſpoſed to be governed even by a confirmation of his doubts.

The ſight of Ellen increaſed his love and his fears, he found her gentle, complacent, yielding, but to all the ſymptoms of paſſion with which he was infected, he found nothing correſpondent in Ellen: From the even tenor of her ſpirits, and the perfect freedom in which he was convinced her choice had been left by her father, he could not ſuſpect that ſhe was influenced in her acceptance of him by any motives but ſuch as ſhe avowed. A ſenſe of his merits, and a conviction that her life would paſs happily with him, but thoſe ſentiments were far ſhort of thoſe he wiſhed to inſpire. He had been told ſhe had loved Henry, ſhe could therefore love. The animation of character which ſhe diſplayed in all ſhe did, put the matter out of doubt. Her warmth of friendſhip for Mary, her attachment to her father, were farther proofs, if any had been wanting. Sir William already began to think it an injury to him, that with the ardent feelings ſhe poſſeſſed ſhe ſeemed to grant him only eſteem.

To the querulous reproaches that ſometimes eſcaped him, Ellen oppoſed at times a good humoured raillery; and at others, with a frank honeſty would refer him to time and his own virtues, as the only grounds on which he could build the probable ſucceſs of his deſires.

"And have you no notion of any love but what is grounded on the merits of the object?" Sir William would aſk.

"Certainly not."

"And

"And do you never love but in exact proportion to thoſe merits?"

"I don't ſay ſo," ſaid Ellen with a bluſh.

"And yet you refer me to my merits?"

"As the ground-work; that once laid, let me alone for the ſuperſtructure."

"Is it not laid?" aſked Sir William peeviſhly.

"Without doubt, but hurrying me will retard and not forward the building."

"Are you always ſo tardy in works of love?"

"All my loves," ſaid Ellen with emotion, "have hitherto

'Grown with my growth, and ſtrengthened with my ſtrength.'

I am of ſlow capacity, and cannot ſeize an idea the moment it is offered me. You muſt not expect to reap before you have ſown, but wait the ſeaſon, and be aſſured you ſhall have a full harveſt."

So Ellen felt, and ſo Ellen believed; ſhe ſaw much in Sir William to eſteem, and much to like, every day he grew more intereſting to her; the happineſs ſhe already began to feel ſhe imputed to him; ſhe did not trouble herſelf to analyze it too ſcrupulouſly, nor to examine how much ought to be referred to the unbounded content that ſhone in her father's countenance, how much to the new-born kindneſs of her mother, how much to the ſatisfaction of her ſiſters, who ſaw in her marriage the probable ſphere of their pleaſures much enlarged. If ſhe adverted to any circumſtance as making a part of her happineſs,

independant of Sir William, it was a ſelf gratulation on acting right, and a conviction that ſhe ſhould not by her new connexions grieve Henry. She underſtood as a certainty, that in a few months he was to return and marry Lady Almeria. This circumſtance had not, 'tis true, made any part of her motive for her preſent conduct, but it was impoſſible not to conſider it as an addition to the perſonal happineſs ſhe promiſed herſelf. The fear that in yielding ſo implicitly to his father's will, he had been too careleſs of that felicity which only can be ſecured by the wiſe choice of a partner for life, would ſometimes obtrude itſelf, but ſhe drove it from her.

It is preſumptuous in me, (thought ſhe,) to decide a queſtion of which I know ſo little. Lady Almeria may have all the virtues and perfections that I wiſh her to have: I hardly know her, ſhall I by judging her harſhly make myſelf unhappy?

There were other uncertain thoughts and vague ſuſpicions, which ſhe found herſelf when they occurred, leſs able to baniſh from her mind, and which touched her own intereſts nearer.

There were ſome doubts of the goodneſs of Sir William's temper, and the liberality of his mind; ſhe ſcarcely knew from what ſuch ſuſpicions aroſe; perhaps from a word or look to a ſervant, an opinion careleſsly dropped in common converſation, an over ſolicitude for trifles, a ſomething of coming ſhort as it were of the thing ſhe wiſhed, rather than any thing directly inimical to it. She had to oppoſe to theſe

theſe ſuſpicions the generoſity and handſomeneſs with which ſhe knew he had dealt in all matters of ſettlement, and in all tranſactions with her father, the unvaried good-humour and ſweetneſs of temper which he diſplayed towards her, with the exception of what might be called the complainings of too ardent a love, an exception which however ſhe might lament, ſhe hardly knew how to charge upon him as a fault.

To theſe were added, the gaiety and pleaſantneſs of his converſation, and his deſire of accommodation in all matters in which ſhe was concerned. Sometimes ſhe thought this a little ſtudied, but ſhe checked herſelf in what ſhe thought might be too great a faſtidiouſneſs, and ſometimes ſhe feared, that whatever idea aroſe in her mind to the diſadvantage of Sir William, might be wholly owing to a compariſon, which, do what ſhe would, would ſometimes force itſelf upon her. When this thought occurred ſhe condemned herſelf as unjuſt, and almoſt criminal, and Sir William was dearer to her from the ſenſe of the injury ſhe thought ſhe had done him.

In a word, he had made that progreſs in her heart, and ſhe had ſo accuſtomed herſelf to conſider him as the perſon who was henceforth to be her beſt friend, that it depended wholly upon Sir William's ſelf to ſecure her love and her happineſs for life.

It is not to be doubted, that Lord Villars received the accounts of Ellen's intended marriage with the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction, but it was a ſatisfaction that he judged it expedi-

ent at preſent, to conceal carefully from his ſon; he imagined that he could never plead ſuch an example of ſubmiſſion ſo irreſiſtibly as in the moment when the final and certain overthrow of all his hopes ſhould fill the breaſt of Henry with grief, diſappointment, and probably reſentment.

Lord Villars entreated his ſiſter to keep Ellen as happy and pleaſed with herſelf as poſſible, and by the moſt marked change in her conduct towards her, and the moſt unbounded approbation of her preſent deſigns, to make her, if poſſible, forget the diſappointment of her love, in the gratification of her vanity. Hence the change of Mrs. Mordaunt's behaviour to her daughter, in which the good heart of Ellen ſo ſincerely rejoiced.

Lord Villars wrote to Mr. Mordaunt beſeeching him to renew their intercourſe and friendſhip; and Mr. Mordaunt, whoſe nature knew not implacability, accepted the olive-branch. Lord Villars ventured one ſtep further, and ſent to Ellen, as a bridal preſent, a coſtly ornament of pearls.

Ellen felt this as an inſult, as though her deſertion of Henry was to be paid with a pearl necklace. From the man who had ſo unrelentingly refuſed her happineſs, ſhe could not accept of ornament, and ſhe returned, with very civil expreſſions, the expenſive trinket.

Sir William was acquainted with this circumſtance, and Ellen ſaw, with a very ſenſible pain, that it diſpleaſed him. He was more willing that ſhe ſhould ſacrifice the dignity of her mind, than that ſhe ſhould betray any remaining

maining reſentment to the perſon who had ſeparated her from Henry.

But the thing was done, and could not be recalled. She endeavoured however to convince Sir William that what ſhe had done was not from a feeling of reſentment, but from that delicacy which forbids the receiving obligation of any kind, and eſpecially of a pecuniary ſort, from thoſe of whom we think ill. And ſhe added, with a ſoftneſs which ought to have ſubdued diſpleaſure, even juſtly founded, that ſhe would have ſacrificed even this delicacy, rather than have done what was unpleaſing to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

'Vola tanto col-difio che lento
——'Gli parrebbe il vento.'

ARIOSTO.

WHILE theſe things were tranſacting in Northumberland, Henry was amuſing himſelf extremely well in Italy, perfectly unconſcious of the blow that awaited him. He had been acquainted with Ellen's journey to Bath, and had ſuffered the moſt cruel uneaſineſs as to the probable conſequence of that expedition; but his heart had recovered its compoſure, and reſumed its hopes, when he knew that ſhe was returned diſengaged into Northumberland. Although ſeparated by ſeas and mountains, the ſame ſatisfaction had filled the hearts of Henry and Ellen, on her being again ſheltered, as they both hoped, by the ſhades of Groby Manor, from the dangers of ſolicitation, and ſcreened from the poſſibility of notice.

This ſhelter had proved vain, and Henry now learnt, although indiſtinctly, and from doubtful authority, of Ellen's intended marriage with Sir William Ackland. On the thought of the diſtance that divided Italy from England, an icy coldneſs ran through his veins, there was no ſtaying there in all the horror

horror of uncertainty, to be made perhaps ſtill more wretched, by being put out of doubt.

He quitted Venice on the inſtant, and with a rapidity far ſhort of his deſires, but almoſt beyond his powers, he arrived in England. Here he loitered not for information, but more and more alarmed by that which reached him as he travelled on, with the ſame breathleſs haſte he urged his way into Northumberland.

Here, at the parſonage, on the cloſe of a fine day, in September, the moon giving a more affecting tint to objects, the ſight of which, from the variety of emotions that they raiſed, almoſt ſhook his frame to diſſolution, arrived the wretched Henry.

He aſked, in a voice ſcarcely articulate, for Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, and was told they were at Groby Manor. This informer was a female, and ſhe added, "for Miſs Ellen is to be married to-morrow, and my miſtreſs is gone to take leave of her."

Henry felt the adder's fang in his heart, and caſting up a look of deſpair, that rather ſeemed to menace than to ſupplicate, he ruſhed forward, and unknowing what he did or what he meant to do, ſoon reached the wood that adjoined to Groby Manor.

Amongſt the few penſioners to whom Ellen's limited means enabled her to extend her benevolence, was a poor woman, who, to the burthen of fourſcore years, added infirmity and misfortune. To her neceſſities Ellen had often ſacrificed the variety of her dreſs,

dreſs, and the power of purchaſing new books, or new muſic, and it was to Ellen not amongſt the leaſt pleaſing circumſtances of her approaching marriage, that it would enable her to ſecure poor Deborah from all the diſtreſſes of penury for the remainder of her life. Nothing however ſeemed ſufficient to conſole the old woman for the approaching loſs of the daily viſits of her beloved benefactreſs; and Ellen made it a point not to remit her attentions while it was in her power to continue them.

The hurry of the preceding day had prevented her uſual viſit to Deborah, but as the cottage did not ſtand more than five hundred yards from Groby Manor, juſt on the outſide of the wood, ſhe had withdrawn from her friends, while they were aſſembled at tea, to give one quarter of an hour to Deborah, to bid her adieu, and beſtow her parting bounty, for Ellen was to depart on the morrow.

She was returning from this humane viſitation, ſoftened by the gratitude and the bleſſings of the poor creature ſhe had left, her mind full of paſt ſcenes, and future expectations, when on a ſudden Henry's figure ſtood before her.

Ellen neither ſhrieked nor fainted, but ſhe doubted not but that which ſhe ſaw was ſupernatural, 'till Henry, who on the ſight of her felt every tumultuous paſſion diſſolve into the moſt melting tenderneſs, ruſhed forward and claſped her in his arms.

"Am

"Am I to believe my ſenſes, are you indeed Henry?"

"Yes, yes, I am Henry, the forgotten Henry; I know I come unlooked for, undeſired, but I come to claim my own; to ſave you from the ſin of inconſtancy."

"Inconſtancy! Do you charge me with inconſtancy?"

"Yes, thou dear falſe one, yes. Can you deny the charge?"

"Moſt confidently. But, dear Henry, compoſe yourſelf: What means this ſudden appearance? What mean thoſe looks ſo eager and ſo wild?"

"Are you not married?"

"No."

"Are you not betrothed?"

"I beſeech you be calm: I will hear all you have to ſay, I will ſatisfy you fully, but do not terrify me thus; you will drive my reaſon from her ſeat."

"Do I terrify you? Forgive me, deareſt beſt beloved of creatures forgive me. You talk of reaſon, mine indeed is gone, is loſt. Put your hand here, here—feel here; do you not feel the burning chain with which my brain is bound?"

"We will ſit down here, we will converſe together: You cannot feel pain any where, Henry, that I ſhall not commiſerate."

"How ſoft is your voice, how kind your accents: Oh, Ellen, you ſhould not thus have undone me."

A paſſion

A paſſion of tears ſtopt his ſpeech; he wept, concealing his face in Ellen's garment. She hung over him in unutterable diſtreſs, and ſought to ſooth him by the kindeſt words of the moſt heart-felt compaſſion.

At length he became more calm, and ſtarting up, "I meant not," ſaid he, "to play the madman and the fool, but let us reaſon the matter together: I will walk from you for a few moments, and having recovered my underſtanding will try to keep it."

This was a ſeaſonable relief to Ellen and gave her time to rally all her faculties; for the ſight of Henry, and Henry in ſuch diſtreſs, had deprived her of every power of recollection, and made her ſenſible only to the extremeſt miſery.

"I think I ſhall not again terrify you," ſaid Henry, returning to her, "I think I can be maſter of myſelf. But, Ellen, I come to call you to a ſevere account, I come to reckon with you for my ruin."

"How innocent I am of your ruin in act or wiſh, I will not tell you, Henry, for you *know*. I will not tell you to turn your mind to paſt tranſactions: My exculpation I am ſure is written in your heart, and cannot be forgotten."

"Is it your exculpation, that you have ſacrificed the trueſt love to a vain ambition? Is it your exculpation, that from diſintereſtedneſs, pure as what angels feel, you are become ſordid, mercenary?"

"Cruel Henry!——No, my dear couſin, you are not cruel; you are not even miſtaken; you

you know I am not mercenary, you know I am not ſordid, you know me thoroughly, and can be at no loſs for the real motives of my conduct."

"I know you thoroughly!—No, no.—Once indeed———"

"No retroſpect:—It is not only upon the preſent occaſion, I have promiſed to forbear it, and to give it is not only uſeleſs but detrimental."

"Cool reaſonable Ellen!——But it is falſe diſſembled, you ſhall not perſuade me that you forget."

"I forget nothing, I ſhould be ſorry to lay the foundation of my duty in the loſs of my faculties."

"And do you indeed remember? Deareſt creature, do you remember? It was in this walk, it was under theſe trees,———"

"Forbear. It was indeed in this ſpot I firſt acknowledged the preference I entertained for you; a preference juſtified by a father's approbation: But here, alſo, I learnt that your father forbade a union, that it would be impious in you to form under his prohibition; and here too I ſolemnly engaged I would never be acceſſary to your diſobedience, and your ruin. Which of theſe recollections can criminate me in your eye, or juſtify your preſent extravagance?"

"All, all may juſtify my extravagance:—That heart with all its virtues has been mine. It is torn from me——moſt unjuſtly torn from me——I have loſt it for ever——Oh! Ellen,

you

you bind me to the rack and forbid me to complain!"

"Such complaint might have been pardonable twelve months ago. No future event can place a more inſurmountable bar between us than was my promiſe then given to your father: In that promiſe you then aequieſced, why now—"

"Are you not about to be married to another? Am I not to be for ever undone?"

"When I promiſed your father never more to liſten to you without his approbation, I knew I for ever renounced you; to-morrow's intended ceremony will not make the renunciation more abſolute, than it then was. The duty of that moment was yielding, the duty of this is perſeverance."

"And you, Madam, I find, are equal to both."

"You will not always, I hope, think that an ironical praiſe, and I ſhall be happy to prove myſelf worthy of it."

They now walked on in ſilence, when coming to a walk that led immediately to the houſe, Ellen turned into it, when haſtily ſeizing her gown, "you are not going?" exclaimed he.

"I am going no where," ſaid ſhe mildly, "but where, if you pleaſe, you may accompany me."

"Accompany you?—No, Ellen, I muſt never accompany you; but may the God of all good accompany you; may he guard you ſleeping, and bleſs your waking hours, and may

may you never more think of such a wretch as I am."

And then quitting his hold he rushed into the surrounding coppice, and was out of sight in a moment. Perhaps had he waited another instant he had seen those signs of weakness in Ellen which he seemed to have taken such pains to excite.

She was stunned with his vehemence, and overcome by her own recollections, her limbs suddenly failed her, and she sunk at the foot of a tree nearly senseless, and wholly unable for some minutes either to act or to think.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

——— 'Celeſtial wiſdom calms the mind,
'And makes the happineſs ſhe does not find.'

JOHNSON.

BUT the mind where reaſon is habitually paramount, gives place but for a moment to the anarchy of the paſſions.

Ellen rouſed herſelf from the temporary ſtupefaction that had ſeized her, and, riſing, returned with all the haſte in her power to the houſe.

Her abſence had already given occaſion for ſurpriſe and inquiry; and Mary had ſuggeſted as its probable cauſe, a farewel viſit to old Deborah.

It had however been protracted until it had produced a conſiderable degree of anxiety in the breaſts of thoſe who thought every moment of her abſence an hour.

Mary and Sir William were about to have come in ſearch of her, when from the windows of the room where they were they ſaw her approach. They ran towards her, and Mary, in accents of ſolicitude, and Sir William in thoſe of reproach, eagerly enquired where ſhe had been.

"With

"With Deborah," ſaid Ellen, and inſtantly the tone of her voice betrayed the emotion which ſtill agitated her, and which the diſcompoſure of her countenance, and the trembling of her limbs made ſtill more evident.

"Why, why would you go there?" ſaid Mary, "that poor creature's gratitude was ſure to be too much for you; how much better had it been that you had been playing and ſinging with us."

"I will play and ſing with you now," ſaid Ellen, and in a hurried and fluttered manner haſtily ſat down to the harpſichord; ſhe touched the keys, but it was diſcord, not harmony, that ſhe produced. Every eye was fixed upon her. Her father drew near with the extremeſt anxiety, and Sir William, who had kept cloſe to her from the moment he had met her, ſaid with a tone of chagrin and reproach, "this viſit to an old woman has ſtrangely diſcompoſed you."

"I am indeed extremely diſcompoſed," returned ſhe, and riſing, "my father, let me ſpeak to you."

Mr. Mordaunt, ſtruck with a deadly fear, though he knew not of what, put his arm round her waiſt, ſhe had need of the ſupport, and withdrew with her into another room.

There a ſeaſonable burſt of tears relieved the almoſt burſting heart of Ellen: But recovered from this agitation, ſhe ſought to quiet, by a recital of every circumſtance, the agonizing alarm that ſhe perceived had ſeized her father. The narrative, however, far from alleviating, increaſed every apprehenſion he had

had before felt: In it he thought he ſaw the wreck of Ellen's happineſs, and in her happineſs that of her reputation. He thought he ſaw the intended marriage with Sir William broken, and broken from a revived paſſion for another man; a paſſion which ought to have been extinguiſhed for ever before ſuch a marriage had been thought of. But he knew not Ellen; he knew not, that the ſevereſt ſufferings for another, fearleſs for herſelf, could not turn her aſide from the path of rectitude and reaſon. He ſaw her agitated, alarmed, and unhappy, and he diſtinguiſhed not the ſource from whence thoſe feelings aroſe. He could not hope that it was alone pity and fear for Henry that excited them. He remained ſilent and thunderſtruck, unknowing what to ſuggeſt, or what to adviſe.

"Let me entreat you," ſaid Ellen, "to go to Mr. Thornton, let him ſeek out the wretched Henry, let him, if poſſible, ſooth his deſperation, and lead him to patience."

"And Sir William?—What ſhall be ſaid to Sir William?"

"I will tell him myſelf every thing."

"Tell him! What will you tell him?"

"All that has paſſed. I am ſure he will join in my commiſeration for the unhappy Henry."

Mr. Mordaunt felt his fears ſubſide, and his hopes revive. "So untoward a circumſtance," ſaid he heſitating, "may perhaps excite in Sir William's mind——"

"Nothing but compaſſion ſurely: How otherways can it affect Sir William? Have I ever

I ever disavowed my affection to Henry? Have I ever pretended that I renounced him from any consideration but that of duty? The circumstance of to-night has not altered the grounds of that renunciation; it has not shaken the esteem, the love I have for Sir William: They were not founded upon the absence of Henry, but upon the good qualities and kind affections of Sir William. My designs and my sentiments are unaltered. I will indeed confess my happiness is considerably lessened. I had been taught to believe that Henry too had sacrificed his first love at the shrine of filial duty: This belief did not form a motive for my own conduct, but it contributed largely to the happiness I hoped to draw from it. I cannot be happy while Henry is so perfectly wretched, and made so by me. But had I known the true state of his mind some months ago, should I not still have acted as I have done? I was not to hold myself accountable to him; and now I do know it, can it, ought it to have any influence on my actions?"

"My dearest Ellen, you are every thing that a father can wish, you are every thing you ought to be."

"Go, dear Sir, go, and send Mr. Thornton in pursuit of our poor wanderer, and beg Sir William will come to me."

The agony of suspense and fear that Sir William had undergone during this conversation, no words can describe; nor had the feelings of the rest of the party been much less acute.

acute. On the return of Mr. Mordaunt they all crowded round him.

"Don't be alarmed, there is no harm.—Ellen has ſeen Henry. But go, my dear Sir William, go, and hear from herſelf all that has paſſed; there is nothing to be regretted in the affair but the miſery of poor Henry."

"Seen Henry!" repeated every voice, when Mr. Mordaunt pronounced theſe words.

"Nothing to be regretted but the miſery of poor Henry!" ſaid Sir William, and ruſhed eagerly to the room into which Ellen had retired.

She met him with her hand held out to him, "Come, my beſt friend, come, and with your kindneſs ſooth the agitation, that compaſſion for the unhappy Henry has excited."

"Unhappy Henry!—Can he be called unhappy, Ellen, whoſe ſufferings make your eyes overflow? and for whoſe loſs the bitterneſs of your regrets robs even your bridal hour of happineſs?"

"Away with ſuch a thought," ſaid the upright Ellen, "if my heart did not ſink within me, if my whole frame were not diſcompoſed by having been witneſs of his diſtreſs, I ſhould be unworthy of your eſteem or my own.——Henry was my firſt, and had not inſuperable obſtacles interpoſed, would have been my only choice; but when I bowed before thoſe obſtacles, it was in a full and perfect ſenſe, without any mental reſervation, without any lurking hope whatever, that I ſaid I renounced him. With equal ſincerity, with equal ſingleneſs of heart, I have avowed, that your merits

merits and your affections have made ſuch an impreſſion on my mind, that in conſenting to paſs the whole of my life with you, I believe I have ſecured a pure and rational felicity for the remainder of my days. The circumſtance of this night, though it has clouded the ſerenity of my mind, has made no alteration in its ſentiments; and I ſhall to-morrow become your wife with the ſame deſires, with the ſame ſatisfaction, the ſame affections, and the ſame hopes, that I ſhould have given you my hand yeſterday."

"In ſuch an aſſurance you ſeem to give me all I can aſk; yet, how far ſhort is ſuch a modified regard, of the ardent and excluſive love I bear you."

"Be aſſured," cried Ellen fervently, "that no love can be more excluſive than mine, if you mean to confine the ſenſe of that word to the love that a wife ought to bear her huſband; if indeed you extend it to all the ſolicitudes of friendſhip, or family affection, know, that I never felt ſuch a love—I am incapable of feeling ſuch a love, and if I were conſcious of any tendencies towards it, I ſhould think I ought to repreſs them——I can feel a preferable love, I cannot feel an excluſive one."

"You never felt ſuch a love?"

"No.——And the engagements that now ſubſiſt between us is a proof of it. Had not a parent, had not my friends, had not my duties, had each their ſhare in my heart, would thoſe ties ever have been broken, upon the diſ-

ſolution of which, thoſe that now ſubſiſt between you and me have been founded."

"Oh, may I be able," cried Sir William, tenderly embracing her, "to connect an ardent if not an excluſive love for me, with all the energies of ſuch a character, then ſhall I be the moſt bleſt of men."

"Doubt not but you will do ſo—did I believe otherways, no conſideration whatever would induce me to become your wife."

Sir William had then patience to liſten to the circumſtances of Henry's ſudden appearance and as ſudden departure. He liſtened, but certainly with no compaſſion correſponding to that felt by the relator; for, as he had a deeply-rooted fear of Henry's influence over the mind of Ellen, ſo he was not without a feeling towards him ſomething reſembling hatred.

Ellen, though ſhe told all the truth, avoided from a ſentiment of delicacy, to preſs upon Sir William's obſervation the extent of Henry's wretchedneſs, and the ſenſe ſhe had of it; and Sir William, though he ſhrunk from every particular that repreſented Ellen as tenderly touched for Henry, ſhewed an eager curioſity after the moſt minute circumſtance that had paſſed, he ſought to draw ſomething like cenſure of the vehemence Henry had diſcovered from the lips of Ellen: But this he ſought for in vain; the accents of the pureſt ſincerity were ever on thoſe lips, nor did any imagined refinement of feeling ever betray her into the wanderings of duplicity, and ſhe felt only the moſt lively and tender

tender compaſſion for the ſorrows of Henry: She knew ſhe had herſelf been deceived as to the ſtate of his mind, and had no doubt but that equal deceit had been practiſed towards him, though the nature of the falſhood was probably different: She could impute his indiſcrete appearance, his vehemence, and his diſtraction, only to his having been kept deſignedly in ignorance of the real ſituation in which ſhe had been for ſome time paſt, and from its having at length reached him in its full extent, and in ſo ſudden a manner, as to ſuſpend for a time all the reſtraint of reaſon and of prudence: All blame, therefore, was far from her mind, and never was anxiety more painful than that ſhe felt on his account.

Mr. Thornton at length returned: He informed her that he had traced Henry back to his chaiſe, which, (his ſervants not having received any orders from him) had waited at the parſonage, from the moment he quitted it until he returned, that having put himſelf into it he had driven back to the next Inn, where changing horſes, he had again purſued his journey evidently with a deſign to eſcape as ſoon as he could from a place which overwhelmed him with recollection he was unable to bear.

Ellen could not hope to hear any thing more conſolatory; yet the idea of Henry a fugitive, under the guidance only of his ungoverned paſſions, flying from her, and ſuffering for her, fixed a pain in her heart, that no conſiderations on the rectitude of her own conduct, or the probable proſpect of happineſs

before her could remove: Her beſt balm would have been a frank and tender participation in her ſorrows by Sir William. It would have been, on his part, the ſureſt means of avoiding the evil he dreaded; but ſhe beheld him with regret and apprehenſion, gloomy and ſilent: His attention towards her wore rather the air of ſuſpicion than of tenderneſs, and ſeemed to ſuggeſt to her the propriety of concealing feelings, which ſhe could not but conſider, not only as unavoidable, but laudable.

The evening wore away with little ſatisfaction on any ſide, and Ellen retired to her apartment with a fear for the peace of her future life; which not the ſudden appearance of Henry, not thoſe recollections that it had awakened in her, but the diſpoſitions which it ſeemed to have betrayed in Sir William had impreſſed on her mind.

When Ellen appeared at breakfaſt the next morning, her countenance wore an air of thoughtfulneſs, which no one in her preſent circumſtances could reprove, but ſhe had endeavoured, as much as poſſible, to baniſh all ſadneſs from it. The gay affection that ſparkled in Sir William's eyes, and the ardent love with which they were darted towards her, did more in one inſtant, towards producing this effect, than all her reflections and reſolutions, formed through a ſleepleſs night, had been able to accompliſh.

"Forgive, my deareſt love, forgive," ſaid Sir William, "all that laſt night might look like diſtruſt, or diſcontent, on my part. My feelings

feelings might perhaps condemn, but my judgment wholly acquitted you; and who will wonder that knows the real value of my Ellen's heart, that a fear, however unjuſtly founded, that it was not wholly mine, ſhould overwhelm me with ſadneſs?"

"My dear Sir William, only do yourſelf juſtice, and you will never have any fear concerning my heart that can give you a moment's uneaſineſs."

Sir William delighted, embraced her, and Ellen's almoſt loſt hope, that the road which her reaſon had pointed out to her, as ſure to lead to happineſs, began to revive.

The marriage ceremony was performed by Mr. Thornton: Mrs. Thornton and her daughter attended their beloved Ellen to church, and there they parted. The pain of this parting ſcene was mitigated on all ſides by a firm promiſe on the part of the Thorntons, that many months ſhould not elapſe before they viſited Berkſhire.

Charlotte accompanied her ſiſter, and Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt and their eldeſt daughter were to join them at Oakley in about a month.

CHAP. XX.

'Patience ſovereign o'er tranſmitted ill.'

JOHNSON.

TO Oakley Ellen began her journey, but in the ſituation of this country reſidence of Sir William's, there was one circumſtance, that ſince the adventure of the preceding day, Ellen had adverted to with pain.

Oakley was ſituated ſcarcely half a mile diſtant from the ſmall houſe belonging to Lord Villars, to which he had retired on the death of his ſon. It was not the uſual reſidence of the family, but ſhe knew it was a favorite ſpot with Henry, and a place to which he frequently reſorted, to purſue the ſports of the field; ſhe could not hope that he would ſoon be able to ſee her with the compoſure, without which he ought not to ſee her at all; and ſhe felt hurt at being the cauſe of baniſhing him from a place, where, in the preſent ſtate of his mind, he might probably have found the moſt eligible; from the diſtraction and regrets that preyed upon his heart. She feared his reſource might be again to quit England, and in this continued eſtrangement from his country and family, ſhe foreſaw a probable change

in

in his character and manner of thinking, extremely to the disadvantage of his happiness and principles; she knew him formed to be an useful and active member of society, capable of fulfilling, with honor to himself and advantage to others, any civil or political duty, which his rank in life, or the circumstances of his country might call him to. To have him waste his existence in wandering from one foreign court to another, distant from every domestic and every national connexion, a prey to useless repining, or the victim of frivolous pleasures, was an idea that filled her mind with the most painful disquietude, a disquietude that arose almost beyond endurance, when she ventured to ask herself the question, "What has driven him to this?"

Sir William observed, with chagrin, her anxiety, and the solicitude with which she desired to hear something of Henry; but in every other particular he had reason to think himself the most fortunate of men.

The charms of Ellen's person and conversation, the sweetness of her temper, and the unfeigned affection that her every action manifested towards him, left him nothing to wish had he known how to have regulated his wishes by the rule of reason.

But, in fact, Sir William was neither reasonable nor amiable. Under all the exterior graces that a pleasing person, polished manners, and a good and cultivated understanding could bestow, he was vehement in his temper, and, when thoroughly provoked, implacable.

placable. Laviſh in purſuit of his own gratifications, niggardly in promoting thoſe of others; he loved Ellen with all the ardency of paſſion, but he loved her as a poſſeſſion, in which he could not bear that any other ſhould have a ſhare. The mildneſs of her manners and the reaſonableneſs of her conduct, with the complacent ſtate of mind that belongs to a ſucceſsful lover, had preſerved him during his reſidence in Northumberland from every poſſibility of betraying his natural diſpoſition, and without deſigning to practiſe any deception, Sir William Ackland, in the firſt months of Ellen's knowledge of him, and Sir William Ackland during the reſt of his life, were two men, of diſtinct and ſeparate characters.

It was, however, only ſlowly, and by degrees, that the true and unamiable character was diſcloſed to the unwilling obſervation of Ellen, and it was not until every doubt was done away, in the moſt calamitous certainty, that Ellen would allow herſelf to believe that the man who could appear reaſonable, obliging kind and generous, was, in truth, unperſuadeable, harſh, violent, and ſelfiſh. But the diſcovery was not yet made—the preſent hour was all harmony, and the brighteſt proſpects opened before her.

She was joined by the family, from Groby Manor, at the time appointed, and ſhe learnt with a ſatisfaction that baniſhed all ſadneſs from her mind, that Henry had ſignified his deſign to his father of taking up his abode in England; he was at preſent engaged in making

making an excurſion to the North of Scotland, but he had promiſed to join his father at the park at Chriſtmas.

In truth, however vehement and reſtleſs Henry might have been, while his mind was divided between hope and fear, and while inaction on his part might be acceſſary to the loſs of his happineſs, he had no ſooner recovered from the paroxyſm of grief and deſpair, into which the conſummation of his misfortune had thrown him, than he roufed all the faculties of his mind to bear with the conſtancy and dignity of a rational creature, griefs that no impatience or extravagance could in any way leſſen.

Of Ellen's perſon and Ellen's character he was enamoured. He looked round, and in his idea ſaw nothing equal to her on earth; and he felt, that however impelled by paſſion, or miſled by fancy, he might in any future hour be tempted to form a temporary engagement with another woman, that there was no other whom the ſanction of his judgment could allow as worthy to ſucceed Ellen in his affections as a wife; leaſt of all could the frivolous, the inconſequent Lady Almeria be worthy; he conſidered her too as the efficient cauſe that had ſeparated him from Ellen, and if to other women he were indifferent, to Lady Almeria he was abhorrent.

But in reſolving that no conſideration ſhould ever compel him to accept of her as a wife, he wiſhed to ſoften the obduracy of his oppoſition to his father's will as much as poſſible. It was in this light that he turned

with disapprobation from the idea that had once appeared seducing to him, of living like a vagabond upon earth, wandering from place to place and finding no where a home.

"I have a home, I have a family, I have a country," said he, "dearest Ellen, with what delight, animated by your approbation, should I have endeavoured to have fulfilled my duties to them all. Your love must no longer be my reward. But your virtue shall be my stimulator, your eye shall follow me through life, and it shall not weep for the degeneracy of your cousin.

Three days after the marriage of Ellen, Henry was sufficiently master of himself to form this resolution, and to write the following letter in consequence of it to his father."

"Ill would it become me, my Lord, to reproach you for the desolation you have brought upon me, I wish my wrongs to be as silent, as they are now hopeless of redress; I would willingly impute some part of them to mistake, and that the fatal consequences of such mistakes may spread no farther, it behoves me, my Lord, to speak with the most unequivocal frankness as to my present sentiments, and my future designs—let me entreat your pardon while I do so."

"The duty I would wish to offer to your Lordship is unlimited obedience; but the circumstances in which I am placed render such a duty impossible: That image which the hand of

of virtue herſelf impreſſed upon my heart; that affection that was once honored by your Lordſhip's ſanction, muſt and will remain the cheriſhed inmate of my breaſt, until the warm current of life ceaſes to flow, and the power of memory is ſuſpended."

"I will be now no huſband, my Lord:—— But, with this exception, I will endeavour to be every thing that your Lordſhip can deſire. If I am taught to hope, that upon this condition I may be allowed to reſume my place in your family, and to participate in the bleſſings of domeſtic ſociety, I will rather endeavour to find a balm for my griefs in the ſcrupulous diſcharge of my duty to my relations and country, than ſeek an aſylum in ſome foreign land, where, buried from all obſervation, I once intended, I and my ſorrows ſhould be mentioned no more. But if—O pardon me my Lord, that I am obliged to be thus peremptory, if ſtill the perſecution, which in its progreſs has involved me in ſo much diſtreſs, is to be carried on, then, my Lord, ſhall I be compelled to bid adieu to my native ſoil for ever."

"My reſolutions are not to be ſhaken, nor will I, by allowing of the apparent poſſibility of my wavering, be acceſſary to any prolongation of hope in the breaſt of your Lordſhip, or of any other intereſted in my deciſion, that muſt end in diſappointment.

"I entreat your Lordſhip, that theſe my unalterable reſolves may be made known in the moſt explicit manner to any whom you may imagine they may concern. I would willingly in my own perſon be ſaved a harſhneſs towards

thoſe

thoſe who may conceive they have a title to even ſomething more than gratitude from me, but if your Lordſhip is averſe from ſaving me this unpleaſantneſs, I ſhall be conſtrained rather to incur the charge of inſenſibility, than that of deceit."

"I ſhall continue at this place until I am favored with your Lordſhip's anſwer, and whatever it may be, I ſhall endeavour to bend my mind to it, with all the ſubmiſſion that becomes,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's,

Moſt dutiful and ever devoted,

HENRY VILLARS.

Lord Villars had been appriſed of Henry's interview with Ellen, and the deſperation that he had manifeſted; and his mind had been filled with the moſt lively apprehenſions in conſequence. There was no extremity that he had not feared Henry might be driven to, and therefore the contents of this letter relieved him from a ſtate of moſt painful anxiety.

At the inſtant it was written he could expect nothing leſs than a formal renunciation of the whole ſex for Ellen's ſake, but Lord Villars little feared that a man of Henry's years, and Henry's diſpoſition, would turn hermit. His deſire of being upon amicable terms with his father, and his purpoſe of continuing in England, perſuaded Lord Villars that time might yet produce all the effects he wiſhed.

He

He readily promiſed that neither Lady Almeria or any other woman ſhould be offered to his acceptance, and manifeſted the moſt parental concern for his preſent ſufferings. "Sufferings, he ſaid, which made his own heart bleed, and which nothing but the moſt cruel neceſſity could ever have induced him to have inflicted on a ſon, whom he loved as he did his own ſoul."

Promiſes and profeſſions coſt Lord Villars nothing, they were equally for the preſent moment without reference for the paſt, or thought of the future. He knew, indeed, how, by the colouring he could give to any after events, to "keep his promiſe to the ear and break it to the ſenſe." He deſired Henry to come directly to the park, where, whatever Lord Villars did, Lady Villars longed to ſee him. Henry had accordingly made them a viſit of a few days, but at the expiration of that time had gone upon a tour into the Highlands, hoping by the means of a variety of objects, and conſtant change of place, a little to blunt the edge of thoſe remembrances, which, while they preſerved their preſent acuteneſs, were, at moments, more than his reaſon and his fortitude could ſupport.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

I knew a wench married in an afternoon, as ſhe went to the
'garden for parſley, to ſtuff a rabbit, and ſo may you.'

SHAKESPEARE.

LORD VILLARS and his family had been among ſome of Ellen's firſt viſitors: From the offenſive flattery and ſtudied fondneſs of Lord Villars, ſhe could not but turn with undiſguiſed averſion, but in the friendſhip and partiality of Lady Villars ſhe experienced a very ſincere pleaſure.

Lady Villars had no very clear idea of the whole merit of Ellen's conduct, but ſhe thought herſelf under important obligations to her for the readineſs with which ſhe had quitted her rights to a connexion with her ſon, a connexion, which Lady Villars honeſtly believed would have been attended with the moſt fatal conſequences to her whole family.

Lady Villars therefore rejoiced in Ellen's preſent ſituation, as in what ſhe thought a due reward for the generous ſelf denial ſhe had practiſed in her conduct towards Henry. But when ſhe ſaw with what propriety Ellen ſupported the rank of life in which ſhe was placed, how ſhe adorned and animated ſociety, and how ſhe conciliated the affections of all who approached her, ſhe could hardly repreſs a re-

a regret that any conſideration, however powerful, ſhould have ſtood in her way, to the ſecuring to herſelf ſuch a daughter, and her ſon ſuch a wife.

With Lord and Lady Villars come Lady Almeria: From Lady Villars, whoſe integrity forbade her concurring in any deception, ſhe had learnt the contents of Henry's letter, ſhe therefore knew that her brows were bound with willow, but her heart ſeemed not the leſs light for this; ſhe rattled, laughed, danced, rode and walked with the gayeſt and happieſt of her companions, made a jeſt of Henry's cruelty, and rallied Ellen on her charms, which loſt no part of their aſcendency even over a hapleſs lover. Ellen's gravity upon ſuch occaſions would have taught any one but the inſenſible Lady Almeria reſerve upon this ſubject; but Lady Almeria had a love of miſchief in her diſpoſition, which no conſideration for another was ſufficient to check her in the gratification of, and though ſhe had no pleaſure in tormenting Ellen, ſhe thought it good ſport to make Sir William jealous.

To a wild girl of little more than ſeventeen Sir William at paſt forty ſeemed a Methuſalem, and ſhe thought it comical to make the old gentleman (as ſhe called him) knit his brow and pout, by talking of the love and the merit of his young rival.

Lady Villars would have repreſſed this impertinence, but Lady Almeria was incorrigible, for joined to no common degree of inconſideration, ſhe was ſenſible of the importance ſhe was to the family, and was not unconſcious

conſcious that in ſpite of the preſent coldneſs of Henry, Lord Villars had not reſigned his hopes of making her one day his daughter-in-law.

She therefore often treated both Lord and Lady Villars with a kind of civil inſolence, and very openly aſſerted her right of having her own way in every thing: She did not want talents, or diſcernment, and ſhe deſpiſed Lady Villars as much for the narrowneſs of her underſtanding, as ſhe did Lord Villars for the ſordidneſs of his views.

Lord Villars tolerated all this in conſideration of the number of her eſtates, but Lady Villars ſoon conceived a decided diſlike to her, and a deep rooted fear of her ever becoming the wife of her ſon; this diſlike and this fear were rendered more lively by the compariſon ſhe daily made between her character and that of Ellen.

But Lord Villars' hopes and Lady Villars' fears were alike unfounded, and were one proof more, added to the thouſands that occur every day, that if the ſufferings of life were to be confined to actual misfortunes, the mountain of human woes which now ſeems ſo immenſe, and extended, would ſhrink into a mole-hill, of a ſize ſo ſmall as almoſt to eſcape obſervation. It is, however, inſeparable from our nature, that our ſufferings ſhall be more from what we fear, than from what we feel, and in reckoning the ſorrows attached to our exiſtence here, we are to eſtimate not what is, but what it is apprehended may be.

Amongſt

Amongſt the joyous circle that Ellen on her marriage had drawn round her at Oakley, her brother was not forgotten.

He had continued under the private tuition where Mr. Mordaunt had placed him on his return from Jamaica, until of a ſufficient age to be ſent to college, and at eighteen he had been removed to Oxford.

Mr. Mordaunt dreading the influence of his wife on the character of his ſon, had ſuffered him to ſpend as little time as poſſible at Groby Manor, while he continued a ſchool boy, and after his removal to Oxford had continued ſo to fill up his vacations with ſome pleaſurable ſcheme or other, as almoſt totally to baniſh him from thence, without any appearance of deſign or unkindneſs. But he was now grown to manhood, and precautions of this kind were no longer poſſible or neceſſary; nor could Mr. Mordaunt any longer refuſe himſelf the ſatisfaction of aſſociating with his ſon, eſpecially as he flattered himſelf, that his own opinions might probably now have more influence over him than thoſe of his mother.

William Mordaunt had now therefore joined the family party at Oakley; he was handſome, gay, and good-humoured, but he was wild, inconſiderate, and ungovernable.

Lady Almeria and he were drawn towards each other, by a ſympathy of character and diſpoſition. From the firſt hour of their acquaintance they became inſeparable, and Lord Villars ſaw that if he did not find ſome immediate

mediate remedy for this impending evil, Lady Almeria's fortune would be loſt to his family for ever.

He had recourſe to his uſual means, delay.

He laid before Lady Almeria the inequality and degradation of the connexion that ſhe ſeemed diſpoſed to form, and declared, that while ſhe was under his direction, neither his honor nor his conſcience would permit him to ſuffer it.

Lady Almeria liſtened in ſilence, and with an inſolent non-chalance to his lecture, and when he had ended it, twiſting her ſaſh ribbon round her arm as ſhe went out of the room, replied between her teeth, "We muſt wait until I am one-and-twenty then."

If Lady Almeria would but wait it was all Lord Villars could dare to hope from her, and from his own machinations during this period of expectation, he was to look for what further was wanting, to his ſucceſs. From his uſual coadjutrice Mrs. Mordaunt, he could not in this caſe expect any aſſiſtance, for however deſirous ſhe might be to promote the intereſts of her nephew, in general, when they came in competition with thoſe of her ſon, they could not be expected to have any but a ſecond place. She had ſeen the growing fondneſs between him and Lady Almeria, and had ſecretly reſolved to do all in her power to forward it. It had been obſerved by Mr. Mordaunt with very different wiſhes and views, but he wiſely thought a ſeeming inattention to what was going on the moſt likely

method

method of preventing a fancy from growing into a prejudice, and he imagined if his ſon were not led by oppoſition into making engagements with himſelf, not to give up Lady Almeria, that the preſent partiality would probably end in a boy and girl's ſhort-lived flirtation, without any farther conſequence.

But the precipitancy of Lady Almeria's paſſions rendered the plans of hindrance on the part of Lord Villars and Mr. Mordaunt, and thoſe of aſſiſtance on the part of Mrs. Mordaunt, equally vain and uſeleſs.

Lady Almeria had liſtened to Lord Villars with the moſt apparent indifference, but this did not ariſe from her being careleſs as to his oppoſition to her deſigns, but from her reſolution that all oppoſition from whatever quarter ſhould prove vain.

She went directly from Lord Villars to William Mordaunt, ſhe found him practiſing archery with ſome of his companions.

"Come along with me," ſaid ſhe, "I have ſomething to ſay to you, Guardy, (for ſo ſhe was accuſtomed in contempt to call Lord Villars) "Guardy," ſaid ſhe, when they were alone, "has been fulminating his interdict againſt my becoming your wife. Neither his honor or his conſcience, forſooth, can allow of ſo unequal a connexion: That is, his honor deſigns to give my perſon to his ſon, who cares not a pin for me, and his conſcience appropriates my fortune as the proviſion for his younger children; but if I and my money are to go to ruin, they ſhall go my own way.

He

He will not find me ſo ſoon moralized and ſentimentalized out of my rights as he found your ſiſter Ellen. What ſay you? Are you inclined to truſt my conſtancy through all the battleings and all the temptations with which it will be aſſaulted in the next four years; or will you make ſhort work of it, and meet me with a chaiſe and four at the corner of the park wall, at one in the morning, and away to Scotland, and let guardy try, with all his bay and brown coach horſes to overtake us?"

"To night!——this moment! in the face of the ſun, in ſpite of all the guardians and all the coach horſes in the world."

"That would be but ſpirited, but no;—we ſhould have ſcolding, and hectoring, and locking up, and the Lord knows what. I think I could be a match for them there too, but I hate unneceſſary trouble, and have no deſire to play the part of a diſtreſſed damſel; let us do the matter quietly, at one, by the ſilent light of the moon. O Lord, it does not ſhine, but no matter, the ſtars will do as well. I will be punctual to the minute, if you are out of caſh I can ſupply you, I received my quarterage two days ago, and having paid no bills, it is luckily entire."

"Well, be it ſo, at one exactly."

"To a ſecond, there's my hand upon it; and now let us go to our aunts, and our uncles, and our couſins, and our guardians, and behave prettily, as a good little Maſter and Miſs ought to do, and we may laugh at them the more when we are by ourſelves.

And

And thus, in leſs than ten minutes did theſe two thoughtleſs creatures determine upon a ſtep upon which all the happineſs or miſery of their future lives depended.

William found no difficulty in engaging a chaiſe and four to be at the appointed ſpot, at the hour fixed upon, nor Lady Almeria any in diſmiſſing her maid before ſhe was undreſſed, nor, when ſhe was gone, in wrapping herſelf up in her furs, and, with a ſmall bundle of linen in her hand, deſcending the ſtairs, opening the door into the garden, or in proceeding from thence to the park, or finally in keeping her appointment with William.

At the corner of the park wall ſhe found him; he received her with all the gaiety of youth, and all the raptures of a lover, they put themſelves into the chaiſe together, and before Lady Almeria was miſſed in the morning, had proceeded too far on their way to Scotland to give any hopes of ſucceſs from a purſuit.

Whatever confuſion the diſcovery of their flight might occaſion in the family at Oakley, or whatever inward vexation it cauſed Lord Villars, who thus ſaw a final end to all his ambitious projects, yet the nearneſs of the connexion in all the individuals who compoſed that family, prevented any violent diſplay of diſappointment or chagrin. Lord Villars thought proper to gloſs over the matter with an aſſurance, that although the reſpect that he had for the truſt repoſed in him by Lady Almeria's father, would have prevented his conſenting

conſenting to ſuch a match, yet the regard that he entertained for the intereſts of his nephew, made him, ſince it had been concluded without his concurrence, ſincerely rejoice in it.

With an air of acting under theſe feelings, he made, though ſomething with an ill grace, his congratulations to Mr. Mordaunt, and Mr. Mordaunt with infinitely more ſincerity aſſured him, that had the connexion depended upon him, it had never taken place, and indeed the deep ſigh that the reflection upon the miſery that an ill-judged marriage can occaſion drew from him, evinced, that neither the ſplendor of Lady Almeria's birth, or the greatneſs of her fortune, compenſated in his opinion for the lightneſs of her mind and the unfeelingneſs of her heart.

The ſatisfaction, however, of Mrs. Mordaunt, who judged very differently, knew no bounds, and Lady Villars could not help joining, (though from very different motives) in her pleaſure.

The fate of Lord Villars upon this occaſion, was peculiarly hard. While half the world called his honeſty in queſtion for having ſacrificed the intereſts of his ward to thoſe of his nephew; the other half arraigned his prudence in ſuffering ſuch a prize to go out of his own family; theſe cenſures were equally unfounded. He had ſpared no pains to preſerve Lady Almeria from his nephew, he had left no art uneſſayed to ſecure her to his ſon:

This

This event affected Ellen very ſenſibly; ſhe could not but be pleaſed that Henry was relieved from all perſecution on Lady Almeria's account, and that he was ſafe from the poſſibility of yielding to it; but the very unfavourable opinion ſhe had of Lady Almeria's character, and which a farther knowledge of her had confirmed, filled her mind with the moſt lively apprehenſions for the happineſs of her brother.

The young couple however, were welcomed on their return from Scotland, without much reproach on any ſide, the neceſſary arrangements of their eſtabliſhment were made, and harmony ſeemed reſtored to all the parties concerned.

Another event which happened in the family of Ellen, at this time, occaſioned much more ſerious conſternation and diſtreſs.

Mrs. Mordaunt had long had the mortification of being witneſs to the miſery and poverty of her eldeſt daughter; no one reproached her as the cauſe, but, notwithſtanding her natural indifference to every ſorrow that did not attack her perſonally, ſhe could not avoid making herſelf the moſt ſevee reproaches; ſhe now ſaw the fatal conſummation of her ill-laid plans of ambition and vanity. The miſerable daughter was returned upon their hands; the unprincipled man, whom ſhe had choſen for her huſband, having collected the remnants of his ruined fortune, had left his wife and two children to beggary, and had quitted England, as he ſaid, for ever.

Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt was little able to bear this additional burthen, there was however no alternative: His daughter and her children were ſtarving, Groby Manor was the only aſylum open to them, to Groby Manor therefore, after a viſit of three months to Ellen, Mr. Mordaunt conducted his wife and the reſt of his family.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

'We know each other's faces for our hearts.'

SHAKESPEARE.

ELLEN and Sir William were now left alone, and Ellen had leiſure to look around her and conſider the duties and engagements that her new ſituation called her to the performance of.

In the ſcheme of happineſs, that in conſenting to a marriage with Sir William Ackland, ſhe had planned for herſelf, a very prominent feature had been the regular and ſyſtematic aſſiſtance ſhe ſhould be able to adminiſter to the wants, both of mind and eſtate, of her poor neighbours. In the fullneſs of her benevolent ſelf gratulation, ſhe had ſaid, "when the ear hears me it ſhall bleſs me, when the eye ſees me it ſhall give witneſs to me; the bleſſing of him who is ready to periſh ſhall come upon me, and I will cauſe the widow's heart to ſing for joy."

In her imagination ſhe educated the young, ſhe encouraged the middle-aged, and ſhe ſupported the old. She ſaw the neat cottage ariſe at her command, the orderly arranged bee-hive reſt againſt the wall, a ſource at once of pleaſure and of profit; the little flower

plat put forth its beauties, the orchard yield its fruits, and the virtues of integrity and induſtry lead content, health and affluence in their train.

Such were the viſions that filled the mind of Ellen, who, wholly inſenſible to every happineſs ſhe could not communicate, thought ſhe placed her own felicity on the ſureſt baſis, when ſhe extended it to others.

Such were the viſions that had filled the mind of Ellen before her marriage, and amidſt the hurried and buſy ſcenes that had held her almoſt wholly engaged in what appeared more perſonally to concern herſelf for the firſt three months after it took place, ſhe had by no means loſt ſight of them.

In all her excurſions in the environs of Oakley ſhe had looked around her with reference to the favorite object that filled her mind; ſhe had endeavoured to make ſome inquiry into the ſituation of the cottagers, and to form an acquaintance with the pooreſt of her neighbours, but ſhe found difficulties that had never occurred to her imagination.

The long reſidence of Sir William abroad, and the character of his immediate anceſtors, who had ſpent little of their time at their principal country reſidence, and who had beſtowed leſs of their thoughts upon the wants and claims of the poor that ſurrounded it, had long occaſioned Oakley to be forgotten by the diſeaſed and the neceſſitous, and had made its owners to be conſidered as hard and ſelfiſh people of faſhion, who regarded their eſtate no farther than as it could furniſh the ſupply

to

to their pleaſures or their vices. There were no old ſervants to whom Ellen could apply for information, how to direct her benevolence; her houſehold conſiſted of a ſet of domeſtics whom Sir William had collected upon his marriage, all ſtrangers to that neighbourhood, and indifferent to its intereſts. The ſteward was a man whom Sir William had brought out of Wales, profeſſedly becauſe he ſhould have no predilection for any of thoſe with whom he would have to deal. Sir William knew as little of the reſidents on his eſtate, as any of his dependants, farther than if they paid their rents well or ill, and whenever Ellen endeavoured to lead him to think upon the ſubject, or to open her own plans, he either repreſſed her by a look of diſapprobation, or laughed her out of countenance on the taſte ſhe had of becoming a Lady Bountiful.

Ellen willingly imputed this backwardneſs to what ſhe ſtill believed Sir William muſt think right, and would therefore in time purſue, to the contrary habits in which he had been ſo long engaged, to the different ſolicitudes that at preſent occupied him, and to the novelty of a country life, and country cares; to her he was laviſh, and therefore ſhe could diſtribute her guineas around her to the relief of immediate and importunate diſtreſs, and with this ſhe endeavoured to reſt ſatisfied, until time would enable her to mature her plans of more permanent aſſiſtance; aſſiſtance that would equally relieve

the diſtreſſes of indigence, correct the errors of ignorance, and reclaim the wanderings of vice.

As Sir William and Ellen rode or walked out together, ſhe would aſk queſtions of the women or children that fell in her way, or would ſtop and enter any cottage that either from its neatneſs or deſolation particularly drew her attention: But Sir William betrayed the greateſt impatience on her thus withdrawing her attentions one moment from him. He ſeemed enraptured to have her left to himſelf, and as if he could not endure that even her duties ſhould ſhare her with him.

The perfect indifference, or marked diſapprobation with which he heard her tales of diſtreſs, and her projects for relieving the ſufferers, awakened Ellen to a moſt painful conviction that ſhe muſt conſider herſelf as ſufficiently happy, if ſhe were allowed in ſilence and unobſerved as it were, to purſue them, but that ſhe muſt not hope from Sir William either concurrence or applauſe.

Ellen here firſt taſted of thoſe waters of diſappointment, which were afterwards to flow with ſo full a ſtream.

The affection ſhe entertained for Sir William was compoſed of confidence and benevolence; of a ſenſe of the virtues ſhe believed he poſſeſſed, and of the gratification that his manners and converſation afforded to her taſte. On this affection ſhe had boldly promiſed herſelf happineſs in her connexion with him, notwithſtanding the decided preference ſhe had formerly entertained for Henry. She looked

looked around her, and ſaw a very ſufficient degree of happineſs attached to the ſtate of marriage, where the contracting parties were well known not to have united themſelves with the objects of their firſt affections; and ſhe religiouſly believed that felicity depended much more upon the qualities of the huſband, than upon the accidental circumſtance of his having been the firſt perſon whoſe merit had made any impreſſion upon the heart of the wife. "Sir William is worthy, is pleaſing," ſaid Ellen, "and I ſhall be happy."

Nothing could have been more juſt than her concluſion, had her premiſes been firm: But if the virtues were to diſappear on which her confidence and her benevolence reſted, how inadequate to her happineſs would be that affection which had nothing left for its ſupport but the external graces of manner and converſation.

Ellen ſoon found the whole ſcheme of her happineſs muſt be incomplete, but ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf (for ſhe was young, and had all that ſanguineneſs of diſpoſition that accompanies the warmeſt philanthropy) ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf that ſome parts were yet in her power.

She had promiſed herſelf indeed that Sir William would go hand in hand with her in her virtues, as well as her pleaſures; but if ſhe could not accompliſh the firſt, ſhe yet did not deſpair of the ſecond, and was not without hope that by this circuitous road ſhe might at length lead him to the point ſhe wiſhed, ſhe therefore eagerly concurred with him in a

deſign he had formed, of building her a dairy houſe, but the oſtentation he diſplayed in his manner of doing it, and the parade he made of ſtudying her taſte, while he ſhewed the moſt unequivocal diſſatisfaction if that taſte differed in the ſmalleſt degree from his own, effectually ſickened poor Ellen of the dairy-houſe long before it was finiſhed, and ſhe never drank one bowl of cream within its walls, uncontaminated by the effects of Sir William's ſelfiſhneſs, violence, or jealouſy.

Every day brought the diſappointed Ellen freſh proofs of all thoſe failings in the mind of him whom ſhe had engaged to love and reſpect.

His expences flowed but in the ſingle channel of ſelf-gratification. They reached *her* indeed, becauſe to ornament and indulge her made at preſent a principal part of his gratification; but to have pleaſures, however innocent or praiſe-worthy, that ſhe did not refer to him, ſhe ſoon diſcovered would be conſidered as a crime.

From the ſofteſt manners and moſt courtly addreſs, ſhe frequently ſaw him, on the ſlighteſt provocation from a ſervant, become furious and abuſive, and ſhe could not conceal from herſelf, that in his dealings with his dependants he was oppreſſive and tyrannical.

Ellen was the admiration and the love of the neighbourhood; her youth and gaiety of diſpoſition led her to participate in all pleaſures that were offered her, and to promote them by every means in her power. Sir William ſoon taught her, for no one could be more

more quick in taking a hint, that ſuch gaiety and ſuch good neighbourhood were diſpleaſing to him; and Ellen quickly withdrew from her uſual parties.

To have made ſuch a ſacrifice to any reaſonable feeling in the breaſt of Sir William, would have coſt Ellen nothing: It was the conſciouſneſs that ſhe made it to the hydra-headed monſter, Jealouſy, that gave it any ſting.

Of whom, it will be aſked, was Sir William jealous? Of every body, of every *thing* that contributed to the pleaſures of Ellen, independent of his agency.

All the unfavorable ſuſpicions relative to Sir William's heart, and temper, which had in a vague and doubtful form ariſen in her mind before her marriage, the occurrences of every day now gave ſhape and ſtability to, and Ellen had not been married ſix months before ſhe found herſelf involved in the difficult taſk of keeping alive, by every artifice in her power, her affection for a man, who might, had he pleaſed, in half that time have ſecured her heart immoveably his own for ever; but the efforts of Sir William ſeemed directed, if indeed they had any direction, rather to deſtroy than to excite or nouriſh love.

On the ſucceſsful cultivation of her affection for her huſband, Elſen knew that all her happineſs, and ſhe feared much of the performance of her duty, depended. She had, it is true, been only acquainted with diſappointment, and ſhe had proved herſelf equal

to the ſevereſt ſelf denial. But her ſorrows had then found the ſofteſt ſoother, and her virtuous reſignation the warmeſt panegyric, in the kindneſs and partiality of her father; in the bittereſt moments of her diſtreſs, in the moſt laborious of her ſtruggles, his ſympathy and his approbation had ſtilled the voice of complaint, and ſmoothed the rugged road of virtue. In the trials that ſhe now foreſaw awaited her, ſhe could hope for no ſuch ſupport, for no ſuch encouragement. Her firſt duty was concealment:——The moſt wilful blindneſs with reſpect to herſelf, and the moſt inviolable ſilence with reſpect to others, was the firſt, the indiſpenſable rule by which ſhe was henceforth to form her conduct.

But, feeling, how could ſhe perſuade herſelf ſhe did not feel? And, ſuffering, how could ſhe be ſilent? Diſappointed, how could ſhe put on the air of ſatisfaction? and loſing all on which ſhe could ground eſteem, how could ſhe preſerve love? Theſe were points of conſtant and painful doubt and deliberation—But more immediate evil preſſed upon her.

Where ſhe could not love ſhe could derive no ſatisfaction from being beloved; ſhe felt that it was not the virtues of her heart, nor even the powers of her underſtanding, that made her ſo much the object of paſſion to Sir William; ſhe was thoroughly awakened to the conviction that the ſolicitude which in the early days of their acquaintance he had diſcovered as to her real character, and upon which ſhe had afterwards reflected with ſo much

much ſatisfaction, as a proof that his affection for her was founded upon thoſe qualities, of which he would be the more aſſured the more he knew her, was in fact nothing more than a ſelfiſh anxiety, leſt in the apparently gentle and complacent virgin, he ſhould hereafter diſcover the arrogant and ſelf-willed wife. In a regulated temper he ſaw a ſecurity for his domeſtic peace; in ſoundneſs of principles he beheld the guarantee of his honor; and in his ſyſtematic ſearch for a wife, by whom to give an heir to his eſtate, he had, in reſpect to character, looked no farther.

In fixing upon Ellen he had been determined, by finding reaſon to believe, that in ſweetneſs of temper, and in goodneſs of heart, ſhe yielded the palm to no one. He had warily decided to fix upon a wife before he was in love, and Ellen's perſon that had at firſt appeared to him, rather ſimply pleaſing than beautiful, ſeemed calculated to gratify his eye, without intoxicating his ſenſes. But although Ellen did not ſeize the ſoul with the firſt glance, her's was even a more dangerous faſcination——the charms of her converſation, the graces of her manner, the winning ſincerity and modeſt frankneſs of her character, all conſpired to render her irreſiſtible, and to give her that power over the mind which beauty alone never beſtowed. Sir William had become madly in love, and no ſentiment in the breaſt of Ellen, not wholly correſpondent to that which he felt for her, could ſatisfy his deſires, or lull his jealouſies to ſleep.

In the well governed mind of Ellen this was a paſſion that could find no admittance. No merit whatever could have excited it. How impoſſible then was it that ſhe ſhould feel ſuch love for a man, who every day loſt ground in her eſteem, not only by his conduct toward others, but even towards herſelf.

Sir William in having become a lover, had retained his dread of being made a dupe to the paſſion of love; hence even his fondneſs was captious, and his indulgence tyrannical; and Ellen, who in marriage had ſought a friend, found by turns only a lover or a maſter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

'How ſmall, of all that human hearts endure,
'That part which Kings or Laws can cauſe or cure.'

GOLDSMITH.

IT was in making theſe mortifying diſcoveries that Ellen ſpent the firſt ſix months after her marriage.

Diſappointed in her ſchemes of benevolence, miſtaken in the character of her huſband, diſſatisfied with herſelf, ſhe was ſometimes tempted to arraign her own conduct in having married Sir William. But this was an idea that her good ſenſe eaſily corrected.

Keeping faſt to principles, ſhe knew herſelf unaccountable for events. If ſhe had been miſtaken, it was from no want of due conſideration, from no precipitancy of action, produced by improper motives. She reviewed her conduct, and found, that being placed again in the ſame circumſtances, and aſſiſted by the ſame lights, ſhe ſhould again act the ſame. This conviction in part calmed her mind. What appeared ſo reaſonable ſhe was perſuaded muſt have a ſufficient portion of good in it, to ſatisfy a rational creature, ſhe endeavoured to find out this good.

She conſidered that her's was no uncommon caſe; that marriage-diſcontent was a weed

that

that found nouriſhment in every ſoil; that it ſprang up alike in the fields of love, and in the wilds of ambition and avarice; that no foreſight could ſtifle it, no prudence eradicate. If her own marriage furniſhed an example that the cooleſt inveſtigation was not ſufficient to guard from the moſt fatal miſtakes in a matrimonial choice, her father's equally condemned the yielding to the blind impulſe of paſſion.

"There are evils," ſaid ſhe, "that no human foreſight can teach us to avert, that no purity of intention, can enable us to eſcape. In the conduct under ſuch evils lies our trial, and the foundation of our future reward or puniſhment."

This thought brought with it a train of the moſt anxious ſolicitudes. Ellen had all the miſtruſt of herſelf that true humility and an earneſt deſire to do right ever induces. To guard herſelf from that acute ſenſe of her ſorrow that might lead to faulty regrets, or culpable impatience, ſhe carefully avoided every exaggeration of her diſappointment that fancy could have ſuggeſted; ſhe would not allow herſelf to think her's a peculiar misfortune, or attended with any particularly aggravating circumſtances; ſhe repulſed from her mind all anticipations, and all retroſpects; ſhe made every hour bear its own burthen, and, as much as in her power, was ready to accept the preſent good, without perverſely dwelling upon the paſt, or anxiouſly conjecturing the future.

If Sir William's ill humour, or his fondneſs, (for effects were often the ſame when cauſes

cauſes were different) put her out of her way of virtue or of pleaſure, ſhe ſought ſome other path which might lead, though not ſo directly, to her point. His ill humour ſhe endeavoured to diſarm by complaiſance, and by gaiety, and to meet his fondneſs with the genuine ſatisfaction of reciprocal love. But this was the moſt difficult part of her taſk. Could ſhe have eſteemed him, his harſhneſs and his unreaſonableneſs with reſpect to herſelf, ſhe could have more eaſily borne, and would hope to have ſubdued; but in loſing her eſteem for him, ſhe loſt this hope, and in loſing this hope, ſhe loſt the power of returning his paſſion with any but diſſembled kindneſs.

Thus Ellen, with the moſt ſincere and upright of human hearts, ſaw herſelf obliged to cultivate hypocriſy as a virtue; but that which was a crime in others, was in her only a misfortune.

From a never-ceaſing ſucceſſion of diſappointments, and from the accumulated weight of difficult duties, Ellen was ſomewhat relieved by her removal to town. The novelty of the ſcene, the gaiety of the amuſements, the objects of ſplendour and curioſity with which ſhe was ſurrounded, filled and amuſed her mind: Sir William too ſeemed to have left much of his ill humour and narrowneſs of heart in the country, the air of London appeared to be more congenial to his character, and to call forth all the amiable parts of it; his liberality and gaiety revived, his money flowed freely round him, his houſe was open

to

to the beſt ſociety, his entertainments were elegant, and his eſtabliſhment ſplendid.

But the principal of all this was little ſuited to that on which Ellen acted, and on which ſhe wiſhed him to have acted. "This, this," would he ſay to her, "is life! I grudge every guinea I expend in the country: I hate that my money ſhould be ſwallowed in thick ale down the throats of ſtupid country oafs, or be waſted in courting a popularity, which is both the ruin and diſgrace of whoever enjoys it."

"But in the improvement of the beauties of nature," ſaid Ellen, "or in the relief of the diſtreſſes of ſickneſs, or age, money will not be miſapplied even in the country."

"What beauties of nature are comparable to thoſe diſplayed in Hyde Park, or Kenſington Gardens? And what diſtreſſes are thoſe that the poor laws do not amply provide for? There is no other country in Europe where there is ſuch a proviſion made for the poor, by the laws, as in England; no country that can vie with it in public inſtitutions for the relief of all kinds of miſery;—I approve all this, but having contributed my part to theſe inſtitutions I have done enough; I have done what I can afford, and private charities I am convinced are only the nouriſhers of idleneſs and the dupes of impoſition."

Ellen did not preſs the ſubject, but ſhe could not but obſerve to herſelf, that the man who did not think two hundred pounds too much to expend in one evening's amuſement in London, could not, with much appearance of

of truth, ſay, he had done all he could afford towards relieving the diſtreſſes of his fellow creatures.

It was one of Sir William's favourite maxims that money ſpent in luxury was of more uſe, than if given in charity; and he would point out to Ellen, with a triumphant air, the ſplendor and richneſs of the ſhops, and aſk her, if ſhe did not think that thoſe who contributed to the ſupport of them were of infinitely more uſe to ſociety, than all the good houſewives and Lady Bountifuls that ever were born.

Ellen was too wiſe to argue with ſelfiſhneſs and prejudice: "Could the whole world be a London, my dear Sir William," ſhe would ſay, "your argument might be concluſive; but after doing all we can to the ſupport of theſe manufacturers of the luxuries of life, there will ſtill remain a large country world, who will periſh for the want of the neceſſaries of it, if thoſe of ſuperior fortunes do not ſometimes turn their thoughts from the ſhop to the cottage."

Theſe kind of converſations made their rambles through London but little pleaſing to Ellen, but ſhe ſeemed to follow Sir William's lead, took more than uſual care of the elegance of her appearance, cultivated her inclination for amuſement, and ſought by every means in her power to do honour to Sir William's taſte, and to ſupport her part in the ſociety he had introduced her to.

In the perpetual crowd in which ſhe lived there ſeemed to be little probability ſhe ſhould

make any ſelections that could alarm his jealouſy, or wound his ſelf-love; ſhe had not time to know any one well enough to become attached to them. Her time and her thoughts were taken up by a perpetual ſucceſſion of engagements, but ſhe had too good health and ſpirits to be eaſily tired; and a perſon of Ellen's quickneſs of parts and cultivated underſtanding found, even in the promiſcuous crowd of triflers and ſimpletons, many perſons from whom ſhe reaped both advantage and amuſement.

If Ellen's heart was heavy in ſcenes, where from her youth, her attractions, and the advantages with which ſhe appeared, ſhe ought to have felt only ſelf-gratulation and pleaſure, it was not from any retroſpect in which ſhe indulged herſelf, but from the immediate weight which the conviction of the real character of the man on whom ſhe was to depend for happineſs, and with whom ſhe was to paſs her life, had fixed there: To love thoſe with whom ſhe was intimately connected was indiſpenſible to the felicity of Ellen. This the character of Sir William made impoſſible; and hence Ellen, with every other bleſſing which human beings implore, was wretched.

But Ellen was not wretched alone. Neither the hopeleſs ſtate to which he was reduced, nor the fortitude he had exerted, had been able to reſtore to Henry his peace of mind. The marriage of Lady Almeria had been a momentary relief to him, but like the remiſſion of a fever, the diſorder ſeemed to have gained ſtrength by its temporary ſuſpenſion.

ſion. Had Ellen been unmarried, and the obſtacle of Lady Almeria removed, (the thought pierced him with ten thouſand ſtings) another Lady Almeria would have been found, replied his reaſon: Lady Almeria was not ſo reſolutely choſen as Ellen rejected.

"Be it as it may," ſaid he to himſelf, "the die is caſt, my fate is determined; I will follow the track I have chalked out for myſelf."

"In purſuance of this reſolution he had viſited his family, he had been kindly received, he had endeavoured to rejoice in the kindneſs, and to buſy himſelf in the intereſts of thoſe around him: But the character of Henry was gone; his gaiety, his impetuoſity, his ſocial humour, his openneſs of heart were no more; an invincible gravity had taken their place, and a cold reſerve to all, with a chilling indifference to every thing around him, marked all his actions. He rather appeared however to have loſt the reliſh for pleaſure than to ſhun it, he affected nothing but from the genuine overflowing ſorrows of his heart, he was incapable of taking intereſt in any thing. There were times when he felt aſhamed of being thus overcome with his feelings, and then he made ſome more vigorous efforts to recover the natural tone of his mind. He imagined he ſhould be more likely to do ſo were he again to ſee, and accuſtom himſelf to the preſence of Ellen.

"Henceforward," ſaid he to himſelf, "ſhe is to be nothing to me but the highly cheriſhed remembrance of an invaluable bleſſing

loſt

loſt for ever. Let me familiarize myſelf to that dear picture, it may be a means of rendering the ſenſe of my loſs leſs bitter."

Under the influence of theſe thoughts he came to town: It was eaſy for him to ſee Ellen every day without being obſerved by her, and when he had ſubdued the at firſt ungovernable tumults that the ſight of her for the ſeveral firſt times had occaſioned, he reſolved to preſent himſelf before her. He remembered the laſt words he had ever heard her utter, "I am going no where but where if you pleaſe you may accompany me." I may ſee her ſtill, thought he, as a friend I may ſee her; and the friendſhip of Ellen is worth the love of all her ſex beſide.

One evening as Ellen was coming out of her box at the Opera, accompanied by Lady Almeria, Henry appeared at the door.

"See, Sir Doleful Diſmal!" ſaid Lady Almeria, "do you know you have quite ſpoilt that man."

Ellen involuntarily ſtopped; ſhe could not for an inſtant move on; but Henry, who had been learning his leſſon, approached her; he had rather the air of a perſon who was accuſtomed to ſee her every evening, than of a lover, who now, for the firſt time after their ſeparation, beheld the beloved object that fate had torn from his arms, without being able to diſlodge her from his heart.

He enquired after her health; he aſked how ſhe liked the Opera; he deſired to know if he could be of any uſe; and all this before Ellen, aſtoniſhed and pained by the profound gravity

gravity and coldneſs of his manners, had ſufficient preſence of mind to utter a word.

"How you two look!" ſaid Lady Almeria laughing, "dear ſhe's very well; ſhe has been enchanted with the Opera, and if you will ſee for her carriage you'll do us a favor."

Henry diſappeared like an arrow out of a bow. In ſpite of all his preparation the ſcene was too much for him, nor could he have borne it a moment longer.

"How very ill Mr. Villars looks!" ſaid Ellen, endeavouring to recover herſelf.

"And how very ill Lady Ackland looks! returned the unmerciful Lady Almeria, "here child, take my ſalts; if thoſe impertinents were to come by juſt now, who were diſputing the other night whether you wore rouge, the wager would be decided in a minute."

"How you rattle, I want no ſalts."

"No to be ſure,—well, don't be afraid, I won't tell the old gentleman at home.'

"I muſt beg, Lady Almeria," ſaid Ellen, earneſtly, "that you will not ſpeak ſo, you know I will not ſuffer it."

"Well then I will tell him: Will that pleaſe you? There's no knowing how to deal with you ſentimental people."

Juſt then ſome gentleman of their acquaintance inquired whether they ſhould call their ſervants. Ellen thankfully accepted the offer, but Lady Almeria ſaid, 'How can you be ſo rude, don't you know poor Sir Doleful is gone on the ſame errand? he'll be in deſpair if you run away without ſeeing him!'

Henry

Henry at that moment returned, and ſaying the coach was then at the door, took Ellen's hand to lead her to it; it was with ſome difficulty he got her through the crowd, and the embarraſſments they were in from that circumſtance, relieved them both from the greater embarraſſments of their own minds.

As he put her into the coach, "May I viſit you?" ſaid he, "and will you introduce me to Sir William?"

"Undoubtedly, with the greateſt pleaſure," ſaid ſhe; it was all ſhe could ſay, for Lady Almeria followed her, and the coach drove off.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

" Self-harming jealouſy! fie, beat it hence."

SHAKESPEARE.

LADY ALMERIA accompanied Ellen home, nor did ſhe ſpare her raillery: they were engaged to meet a party at ſupper, but as it was ſomewhat early, nobody happened to be arrived, and they therefore found Sir William, who was juſt returned from his dinner ſociety, alone.

Ellen would have choſen not to have mentioned Henry's name before Lady Almeria, but as ſhe was confident it would come out in the courſe of the evening, that ſhe had met with him, ſhe thought it moſt prudent to ſpeak, with all the indifference ſhe could aſſume, of the circumſtance herſelf.

" I have ſeen Mr. Villars," ſaid ſhe to Sir William, " and he has deſired me to introduce him to you."

" Oh! I wiſh you had ſeen them both," cried Lady Almeria, " one ſo grave, the other ſo pale—Bow goes his worſhip, courtſey goes her Ladyſhip—you would have ſworn they had not ſeen each other for three hundred years, and were not overjoyed at the meeting now.

Well

Well, I proteſt I don't wonder Ellen choſe you, if ſhe could have any notion what kind of man Henry would become, for I proteſt I think you ten times the more agreeable perſon I vow."

"Did you ſay you would introduce Mr. Villars to me?" aſked Sir William very gravely, without regarding Lady Almeria.

"I did," ſaid Ellen.

"Why, can you have any objection?" ſaid Lady Almeria, "Ellen you know jilted him for you."

"What nonſenſe you talk, Lady Almeria?" ſaid Ellen.

"She certainly does not talk truth," ſaid Sir William, with the ſame gravity as before. And here, much to the relief of Ellen, they were joined by more company, and the evening paſſed as uſual.

When they retired to their own apartments, Ellen remarked a gloom upon Sir William's countenance, that ſhe had never before obſerved ſince their arrival in London. She endeavoured to diſſipate it by more than uſual cheerfulneſs on her part, but he ſeemed to regard her with an eye of ſuſpicion, and preſerved a gloomy ſilence: Ellen heſitated whether ſhe ſhould ſeem to remark this change in his humour, and endeavour to regain his confidence, and diſſipate his chagrin, by explicit declarations of unalterable attachment.

But the caſe between them was much changed, from what it had been at the period when ſhe had laſt ſeen Henry, and when ſhe had

had held this conduct with advantage. Sir William at that moment poſſeſſed her eſteem and warmeſt friendſhip; now he had nearly loſt both one and the other: With truth could ſhe have promiſed inviolable conſtancy, but to ſpeak of an unſhaken attachment which no longer ſubſiſted, ſeemed adding hypocriſy to unkindneſs; the profeſſions ſhe had formerly made him, had flowed freely from her heart, now they would be uttered with embarraſſment and coldneſs; the fears which then ſeemed to oppreſs him, ſhe had regarded with compaſſion; the ſuſpicions that he now evidently entertained, ſhe conſidered as injurious; they appeared but new marks of that narrow and ſelfiſh mind, the effects of which ſhe had every day reaſon to deplore.

The debate whether ſhe ſhould conquer ſuch feelings, or yield to them, held her ſo long, that before ſhe was aware her ſilence was as marked as Sir William's, and they both retired to reſt with equal diſinclination to ſleep.

Some few hours of uneaſy thought reſtored to Ellen her uſual calm of mind.

However oppreſſed her heart might feel, by the afflictive change that appeared to be wrought in the character of Henry; and however alarmed, and ſomewhat offended ſhe might be by the ſuſpicions to which ſhe was aware Sir William had yielded; yet her confidence that her conduct would never juſtify the one, and her hope that time might bring ſome alleviation to the other, enabled her wholly to ſuppreſs her reſentment, and ſo far

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to overcome her ſorrow, as to baniſh from her countenance and manner every appearance of it. In the courſe of her reflections ſhe had alſo made ſome that had ſoftened her heart toward Sir William.

Oh! thought ſhe, that he would but let me love him. The heart that can form ſuch a wiſh is not far from its gratification, and it was with unaffected tenderneſs that Ellen propoſed to Sir William to paſs the morning in an excurſion ſome miles out of town, which he had talked of a few days before; but Sir William coldly repulſed her by an air of ſcornful indifference, and by ſaying he had engagements elſewhere.

Elſewhere he went, for he quitted Ellen the moment breakfaſt was over, and ſhe ſaw him no more in the courſe of the morning.

Ellen had previouſly dedicated this morning to ſome home occupations, but the tumult of mind Sir William's unkind behaviour occaſioned, with the train of dangerous reflections it drew after it, made her afraid to truſt herſelf with herſelf for a whole morning. The moment, therefore, that ſhe could compoſe herſelf, after his departure, ſhe ordered her carriage, and continued to find occupation from home 'till a late hour.

On her return, the firſt card ſhe ſaw was that of Mr. Villars, but ſhe had little time to think of this circumſtance when ſhe found to her ſurpriſe that Sir William was not yet returned home.

They were engaged to dine at her brother's, but Ellen having waited in vain beyond

yond all dinner time, for the return of Sir William, ſhe found herſelf ſo inexpreſſibly uneaſy, that ſhe was in no condition to keep her engagement, ſhe therefore excuſed herſelf on the ſcore of indiſpoſition; and with a heart oppreſſed by fears and apprehenſions, to which ſhe ſcarce dared to give a name, ſhe awaited with a degree of excruciating impatience, ſhe had never before felt, the return of Sir William.

The clock had ſtruck nine when ſhe heard his knock at the door; ſhe ran to the top of the ſtairs to meet him, and catching hold of his hand, "How glad I am to ſee you, where, where have you been?"

"I have been at your brother's," ſaid he coldly, "but I could not ſtay when I heard you were ill; are you better?"

"But where were you all this morning? Why did you not come home to dreſs?"

"I was kept late in the city; I knew your brother would excuſe me: But what's the matter? What kept you away?"

While Ellen detailed her fears, and her uneaſineſs, Sir William regarded her with an air as if he doubted the truth of what ſhe ſaid.

"I thought," returned he, "you had been above the fooliſh fears of your ſex; it is a pity you gave way to them in this inſtance, you have miſſed ſeeing an old friend—Mr. Villars was at your brother's."

The inſulting unkindneſs of theſe words filled Ellen's eyes with tears.

"No, Sir William," ſaid ſhe, "I have miſſed nothing that I regret on that account,

I assure you: I see how your suspicions wrong me—but, receive my solemn promise, that as far as it depends upon me, I have seen Mr. Villars for the last time."

"No romantic resolutions, I beg; let me not be made ridiculous by your high-flown virtue. If Mr. Villars be as indifferent to you as he ought to be, and as you have pretended, why should he not visit at my house like any other person of your or my acquaintance?"

"I might have asked you that question, for the objection seemed to come from you."

"And you did not know Mr. Villars was to be at your brother's to-day? And you did not stay away on that account?"

"No, upon my honor—I stayed away for the reasons I have given you."

"Then I ask your pardon; I have been too hasty in my conclusions perhaps: Mr. Villars is now my acquaintance, you will consider him henceforward as such; and if you would have me believe that you regard him in no other light, you will make him as much and neither more or less of your parties than you do any other person, who has the same claim to your attentions."

This was almost too much for Ellen; but subduing every resentment, and every tender feeling, she said, "I will do in this, and all other things, as nearly what you wish as I can, and where I fail, I hope your candour and your love will be heard in my excuse."

"Oh! Ellen," said Sir William, grasping her hand, "could you but love me as I have loved

loved you!—But I am a fool to expect it—I make myſelf ridiculous——I'll change my dreſs and we'll go together to Mr. Curzon's, and then let this nonſenſe be forgotten."

"Oh!" cried Ellen to herſelf, with a deep ſigh, as he left the room, "how impoſſible it is to love this man."

At Mr. Curzon's they met Lady Almeria.

"So, ſo, you are not ſick after all," ſaid ſhe, "I never thought you were; I'll lay my life you were afraid of meeting your old lover."

Ellen would have explained how the unaccountable abſence of Sir William had alarmed her.

"Yes, yes, very likely—I don't believe a word of it though: But come, if you are not really afraid, ſhew it now, for there he is. In ſpite of his grave face I would bring him with me. Thank my ſtars Mordaunt is not jealous."

Although all this was not profeſſedly ſaid in the hearing of Sir William, yet was he ſo near that he loſt not a word of it. He now walked on, and Lady Almeria ſaid, "I was running away, for the place is as dull as a quaker's meeting: I cannot get a party at caſſino, but with old Dowagers, the very ſight of whom gives me the vapours; but now you are come I ſhall have a little chat; or, come, let us ſit down to caſſino, and Mr. Villars ſhall be of our party, though he is almoſt as bad as an old Dowager too, but perhaps your preſence will enliven him."

Mr. Villars then came up, and with great gravity, hoped Ellen was better.

"Bleſs me, ſhe was never ill!" ſaid the ever talking Lady Almeria, "I told you ſo all along."

"I hope Mr. Villars will, in this caſe, rather believe me than you," ſaid Ellen with a ſmile, "but I am now quite well."

This was the firſt time that Ellen had ever called Henry Mr. Villars, when ſpeaking of him, the word ran through his veins like ice.

"Lady Almeria is ſo good as to anſwer for every body," ſaid he, faintly ſmiling, "it is no wonder that with ſo much buſineſs upon her hands, ſhe is not always quite accurate."

"I ſee you improve," returned ſhe, "I have not heard you attempt being ſaucy this age; but you muſt play at Caſſino with us. I have been doing nothing 'till I am tired to death."

"Let Sir William make a fourth," ſaid Ellen.

"No, indeed," returned Lady Almeria ſharply, "I have had a doſe of Sir William to-day, I can tell you; he really grows intolerable."

"I hope you intend I ſhould love you better for ſuch freedoms," ſaid Ellen.

"You'll not love me the worſe; beſides, *I may* ſpeak what I think, whatever *you may* do."

"I have not quite loſt that privilege," returned Ellen, "and I tell you plainly that if you mean I ſhould be of your Caſſino party, you muſt be a little more agreeable."

"Agreeable! I'll be as agreeable as an angel:—And ſo do go, that's a good ſoul, (ſpeak-

(ſpeaking to Henry) and find us a fourth—— but not Sir William."

However Henry might take moſt of theſe inſinuations, for Lady Almeria's accuſtomed rattle, he could not but obſerve the ſhade of chagrin and melancholy that ruſhed on Ellen's brow, and he obſerved it with an anxious curioſity to know its real cauſe. He returned in a moment, bringing Sir William with him.

"See, I have obeyed you," ſaid he to Lady Almeria.

"Obeyed me? No, I proteſt againſt playing with huſbands and wives: Sir William, you are the only man in the room I objected to."

"I muſt hope, then," ſaid he with a laugh, "that you are the only lady in the room that *would* have made the objection; and even that ſtretch of vanity won't conſole me under the misfortune of your diſpleaſure."

"Oh, I did not object to you poſitively, only relatively, in your capacity of huſband."

"There may be ſomething flattering in that objection," returned he, "and now let you and me try to beat Lady Ackland and Mr. Villars."

This little party at cards diffuſed ſomething like eaſe amongſt Henry, Ellen, and Sir William, in its conſequence, though it was little ſhort of martyrdom at the time; and from this night Henry viſited and was received at Sir William's houſe on the footing of a common acquaintance.

CHAP. XXV.

"Ne ſcuſa accetto che foſſe amore
"Stato cágion di coſi grave errore;
"Che amor dè far gentileun cor villano,
"E now far d' un gentil contrario effetto."

ARIOSTO.

AS Ellen and Henry now each other almoſt every day, the emotion with which they at firſt met wore off by degrees: But Henry loſt nothing of his gravity, and he could not but perceive that it ſeemed in ſome degree contagious.

Ellen's both natural and aſſumed ſpirits too often ſunk under the weight of every day's vexations that ſhe received from Sir William: But Henry who knew nothing of all this, fluctuated between hope and fear, that the penſive thoughtfulneſs that ſometimes overſpread her countenance, might be imputable to the recollection of paſt ſcenes. He wiſhed her happy, he wiſhed her upright, but he knew not how to wiſh her wholly forgetful of his former ſufferings, or wholly inſenſible to his preſent. Nothing, however, aroſe, that could lead to the clearing his doubts. Ellen did not appear to ſhun, or to ſeek his compa-

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ny; ſhe converſed with him with her uſual frankneſs, treated him as her relation and friend, but ſeemed to have forgotten he had ever been her lover; yet he often ſaw her eyes fill with tears, and a ſigh of diſſatisfaction would ſometimes eſcape her.

He turned his attentions toward Sir William, but could ſee nothing in his conduct that could give him reaſon to ſuppoſe the ſource of her unhappineſs lay there. Sir William was in fact an impenetrable man; he knew how to conceal from the whole world his real diſpoſition; and he had beſides habitually different manners, and a different countenance for his public and private hours.

He dreaded to draw on himſelf the ridicule that is attached to the character of a jealous huſband, and he wiſhed his acquaintance, eſpecially thoſe of his own ſtanding in life, to believe him perfectly ſatisfied in his choice of a wife.

The fangs of jealouſy, however, ſtruck deeper and deeper into his heart every day The more he knew of Henry, the more he knew him to be the man moſt ſuited to the ſentiments and feelings of Ellen: In accidental converſations he was frequently ſtruck by the coincidence of their opinions. Their minds ſeemed to be formed in the ſame mould, their hearts to beat in uniſon, their wiſhes, their pleaſures, their purſuits to be the ſame; the ſimilarity of their taſte, and of their virtues, ſeemed to form them for each other, and he knew not how to truſt, that the latter would

be ſuch a barrier between them, as the former would not ſurmount; yet could not the keen eye of jealouſy diſcover in the conduct of either any thing to reprove.

All was open, frank, and above board; he could not obſerve that Henry ſought Ellen apart from him, or from the reſt of the world, nor could he diſcover in Ellen any affectation of too much or too little ſolicitude in her intercourſe with Henry: But he ſuſpected that he himſelf loſt ground daily in the eſteem of Ellen, for he knew that he deſerved to do ſo; and he believed it not in nature that Ellen not loving him, ſhould forget that ſhe had loved Henry. Henry too, ſo deſerving of her love! ſo conſonant to her taſte! ſo apparently, ſo almoſt avowedly conſidering her as the firſt of women! He could not have been more perfectly convinced of their mutual intelligence had he received the moſt unequivocal proofs of it.

Hence his private hours with Ellen were ſpent in indirect upbraidings, in cruel inſinuations, in direct charges of want of love on her part, which ſuch conduct ſerved completely to verify.

Ellen oppoſed to all this injuſtice the calmneſs which good ſenſe dictates, and the gentleneſs which a regulated mind inſpires. She treated Sir William's unkindneſs as the effect of a diſtemper, and ſhe thought ſhe ſaw no cure for it, but in the moſt undiſguiſed frankneſs.

"You have conceived the moſt diſtreſſing ſuſpicions," would ſhe ſay to him, "and the misfor-

misfortune is the greater ſince being totally unfounded I know not how to clear myſelf from them: If you would preſerve any of that love in my breaſt, of the diminution of which you ſo bitterly complain, you muſt give it ſomething whereon to feed; complaints, reproaches, and calumnies, were never the ſuſtenance of affection. Take me where you will, I am ready to accompany you to the remoteſt corner of the world, there I will live only with you and for you: Fix upon any plan of life, where, though excluded from the ſociety and pleaſures of it, you admit of its duties, and you will find me ever ready to concur: But let us not continue amid ſcenes of imagined amuſement and real miſery, where it is impoſſible but the very conduct you injoin me ſhould fill your heart with bitterneſs, and increaſe an evil which can only be cured by the reflections which time and a continued obſervation on my real character will enable you to make."

This was good advice, but it was the advice of cool reaſon, not the fervent expoſtulations of ardent love, ſuffering under the miſery of ſuſpicion; Sir William therefore rather reſented than benefited by it.

Retirement, too, was by no means to his taſte: He could not have been happy, even in the love of Ellen, if he muſt only muſt have enjoyed that love in a deſert. The world was the theatre on which his talents and his accompliſhments were ſhewn to moſt advantage; in the ſociety of men of genius, in the aſſemblies of people of high rank, in the cir-

cle of courts, Sir William had been accuſtomed to be liſtened to, and admired; and it was in ſcenes ſuch as theſe that he could alone find happineſs. Could Ellen have accompanied him in them, and could he have been convinced that ſhe preferred him to every other man ſhe met there, his happineſs would have been complete: But in a ſolitude the gratification of his vanity was wanting to his felicity; and in the world, the gratification of his love. Poſſeſſed, however, with the opinion, that Ellen's heart was wholly given up to Henry, he no longer felt any pangs from jealouſy of which he was not the object, and in removing her from him he removed her from all whoſe attention toward her gave him uneaſineſs; yet to ſecure his own honor in the preſervation of her's, was more a point of delicacy than a cure for the wounds of his mind. Once convinced that ſhe had ſacrificed it to her paſſion for Henry, and he would have found, if not a compenſation, at leaſt a gratification in the ſecurity of the puniſhment he meditated; but for the pangs inflicted by a perſuaſion that he had irrecoverably loſt her affection, no diſtance that he could place between her and Henry, no vengeance that he could purſue, no indemnification he could propoſe to himſelf, could heal his ſorrows, or reſtore him to peace. Solitude he would have thought rather favourable than diſadvantageous to the ſentiments he believed ſhe entertained, and therefore both to occupy her mind with ſcenes in which Henry had no ſhare,

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as well as to gratify his own taſte, they removed, on leaving town, to Weymouth.

Ellen, the unhappy victim of this mixture of ſelfiſhneſs and vanity, had flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould either have been permitted to have viſited Groby Manor, or to have returned to Oakley; but Sir William ſeemed to have an almoſt equal averſion to both places.

The benevolent expences of Ellen, at Oakley, in which he had no inclination to join, or deſire to countenance, he felt as a reproach to him; and the ſcenes of Groby Manor he conſidered as too cloſely connected with the memory of Henry to be favourable to his intereſt.

Ellen quitted town without regret, but ſhe did not go to Weymouth without reluctance. The little lightneſs of heart which ſhe had carried with her to London, had long ſince been loſt in the increaſing unkindneſs of Sir William; the amuſements it afforded had loſt their novelty, and with their novelty, to a mind ſo ill at eaſe as her's, their power of intereſting: But the duties and pleaſures of a country life ſhe knew were ſo ſuited to her taſte, as always to afford employment for her faculties and gratification to her heart. She had loſt the hope of being able to love Sir William, or of awakening in ſo irrational and ſo ſelfiſh a mind as his, that ſpirit of juſtice, from which even while he continued to love her, ſhe could alone hope for any degree of happineſs, and ſometimes extending her views into a futurity when probably he would love her

her no more, ſhe trembled for the ſituation in which ſhe might find herſelf,

But Ellen's good ſenſe forbade her to torment herſelf with the apprehenſion of any probable evils, and ſhe was more willing to encourage the hope that if ſhe might be allowed to take up her abode at Oakley, whether Sir William choſe to be with her or not, ſhe might always be able to ſecure to herſelf a very competent ſhare of content, in the active diſcharge of her duties. At preſent ſhe was however compelled to give up all thoughts of the quiet and intereſting occupations of the country, and to prepare herſelf for all the fatiguing diſſipation, and ſickening repetition, of a ſea-bathing place.

Ellen had only been a very ſhort time at Weymouth, before ſhe had reaſon to ſuppoſe herſelf in a circumſtance that ſhe believed would give the greateſt pleaſure to Sir William.

During the firſt months of their marriage he had expreſſed an anxious impatience for the proſpect of becoming a father, and had more than once teſtified chagrin and diſappointment, when there were no appearances of his ſoon being one. Ellen herſelf anticipated a thouſand delightful cares and pleaſures that would ariſe from the duties of a mother, and was not ſhy of owning to Sir William, that the indiſpoſition under which ſhe then ſuffered, would probably put him in poſſeſſion of his wiſhes.

But this information far from being received by Sir William with pleaſure, ſeemed to over-

overwhelm him with the ſenſe of ſome ſudden misfortune; his countenance changed, his lips quivered with ſuppreſſed emotion, and he had hardly ſufficient command of himſelf to utter a word of kindneſs or congratulation on the ſubject.

All this was a perfect enigma to Ellen.—Happily in this inſtance her innocence defeated her penetration, and after much uneaſy conjecture, ſhe reſted upon the ſuppoſition, (a ſuppoſition ſufficiently painful) that Sir William having loſt all love for her, had with it loſt all deſire of any farther tie between them. She was confirmed in this idea when ſhe obſerved that he rather encouraged than reſtrained her in riding, walking and dancing. But Ellen, who began to ſee that all the felicity of her future life might probably depend upon children, became extremely ſolicitous not to loſe, by any indiſcretion of her own, her preſent promiſe of ſuch a ſource of happineſs.

Sir William without ſeeming to advert to the care ſhe was willing to take of herſelf, was always projecting ſome party of amuſement; ſome riding, fiſhing, or frolicking expedition, that called for exertion of bodily ſtrength. Ellen had very good health, and knew not how to hold herſelf excuſed from ſuch engagements, without ſeeming to take a ſuperfluous and ſelfiſh care of an intereſt which nobody elſe appeared to think about.

Having ſpent two moths at Weymouth, Sir William formed a party with another family to travel through South and North Wales,

Wales, to croſs the kingdom from Cheſter to Scarborough, and fully to occupy the time until Chriſtmas, when they were engaged to ſpend a month with Mr. Mordaunt, and Lady Almeria, at their houſe in Devonſhire.

Ellen ventured to plead for a little reſt, and mentioned Oakley, but Sir William told her, that travelling would do her good, and that he had planned the whole ſcheme entirely on her account.

She was leſs diſinclined to give into it, from the hopes that when they were ſo far North as Scarborough, ſhe ſhould be able to perſuade Sir William to make a viſit to Groby Manor. She communicated this hope to her father, and in this hope ſhe performed her peregrination through Wales, with much ſatisfaction. But by the time they arrived at Scarborough Sir William declared the ſeaſon ſo far advanced that no conſideration would induce him to venture a mile farther North, and under this pretence he hurried her by haſty journies into Berkſhire.

Ellen happily ſuffered little by all theſe journeyings, but when ſhe found herſelf once again at Oakley, ſhe would have been very happy if ſhe might have remained there for ſome time; Sir William however declared himſelf impatient to join the ſociety at Stanton Park, and to Stanton Park they accordingly went.

Lady Almeria had filled her houſe with a numerous party of young diſſipated people of faſhion: Hunting, riding, ſhooting, billiards, and ſhuttlecock, engaged the mornings; the

the pleaſures of an expenſive table, high play, muſic, and dancing, occupied the evenings, here appeared love in all its degrees, from the ſerious, ſighing, jealous ſwain, to the pert fluttering coquet, who laughed at the paſſion ſhe affected to feel.

Mr. Mordaunt and Lady Almeria had long ceaſed to affect even the ſemblance of a paſſion which had carried them ſo precipitately into Scotland together, but in having ceaſed to contribute to each other's pleaſures, they had but fallen into a contrary extreme of wiſhing to interrupt them. He was careleſs, ſhe indifferent—he coquetted with every pretty woman who would liſten to him, and ſhe flirted with all the agreeable men who came in her way.

She had juſt lain in of a poor neglected little girl, who, confined to the nurſery, was ſeldom viſited by her mother. In ſcenes ſuch as theſe, where Ellen found ſo much to diſapprove, and ſo much to lament, this nurſery ſeemed her beſt refuge, and here ſhe ſpent many hours every day.

Sir William, ſince their abode at Weymouth ſeemed to have loſt much of his former paſſion for Ellen, yet he could not ſee her, in ſuch a circle as that with which ſhe was now ſurrounded without feeling her ſuperiority——He did feel it——his love ſeemed to revive, and he often ſought her in this lame nurſery where ſhe paſſed ſo much of her time.

Ellen, who never loſt ſight of the virtuous deſire of being one day able to inſpire Sir William

William with ſuch a way of thinking as would excite and retain her affection, felt her hopes of the approach of ſo deſirable a period ſpring anew, whenever domeſtic pleaſures, or domeſtic virtues appeared to engage his attention, or occupy his heart. She was delighted to ſee him quit the diſſipated, and, in fact, vicious, ſociety of the drawing-room, or the eating parlour, to ſeek her in the innocent receſſes of the nurſery. With ſportive fondneſs ſhe would endeavour to make him take his ſhare in nurſing the bantling; and would anticipate their mutual pleaſure when they ſhould have ſuch a plaything of their own: But from this ſubject he always appeared to ſhrink, and though he followed her to a nurſery rather than be abſent from her, he came there only for the purpoſe of drawing her away from it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

—— "I am angling now,
"Though you perceive me not, how I give line."

SHAKESPEARE

ELLEN had now been at Stanton Park more than a month, and the little pleaſure ſhe took in the ſociety there, or rather, the poſitive diſapprobation ſhe felt towards moſt of the individuals that compoſed it, had cauſed her, as it were, to fold up her charms and her talents in a civil reſerve, that forbade all familiarity in thoſe who approached her.

At this time Mr. Villars arrived at Stanton Park.

There had never been any diſtinction between Ellen's manners towards him, and towards thoſe, who with him had frequented her houſe in town: There, whatever difference of character might really exiſt, in the interchangement of the common-place civilities of an aſſembled intercourſe, little difference could appear: But here, where in the freedom and familiarity of behaviour that prevailed, every vicious principle ſeemed to be diſplayed, and every depravity of the heart to be laid

laid open. Here indeed there was a decided diſtinction. When ſhe converſed with Henry no coldneſs ſat upon her brow, or reſtrained her tongue, her heart was upon her lips, the ſmile of approbation dimpled in her cheek, and ſparkled in her eyes.

Henry came immediately from Groby Manor to Stanton Park. Of Groby Manor, of her father, of her ſiſters, of her beloved Thorntons, ſhe was never weary of talking: There was no inquiry relative to all theſe, that was too minute, no circumſtance that was not intereſting.

In theſe converſations, it is true, Ellen wiſhed nothing ſo much as that Sir William ſhould partake; for ſhe wiſhed nothing ſo much as that they ſhould be equally important to him; but the vivacity that the arrival of Henry ſeemed to have inſpired her with, was a mortal offence to Sir William, and a confirmation, "Strong as proof of Holy Writ," of all he had before ſuſpected.

From this period the moſt deadly hatred ſucceeded in the breaſt of Sir William, to that love which he had once felt for Ellen, and from this period he nouriſhed the moſt determined reſolution of revenge.

But Sir William was indeed capable of that hypocriſy, of which he moſt unjuſtly ſuſpected Ellen. The dread he entertained of being marked as a jealous huſband, enabled him to diſſemble, even with her, the pangs that wrung his very ſoul.

Inſtead

Inſtead of the conduct he had manifeſted in town, he continued his newly reſumed fondneſs; frequently made Henry the object of his panegyric; pointed out to her his ſuperiority to thoſe around him, ſhewed a pleaſure in his converſation, and always ſought to make Ellen a party in it. To this depth of diſſimulation he was inſtigated, not only by a deſire to eſcape the ridicule of jealouſy, but by a hope that by thus laying all ſuſpicion aſleep in the minds both of Henry and Ellen, he ſhould attain a certainty of that, which though he did not doubt, he could by no means prove, and nothing ſhort of proof he knew could bear him out, even in his own opinion, in the courſe he was reſolved to purſue.

The art of Sir William was much more than a match for the ingenuous innocence of Ellen: She entertained not a doubt but that he was convinced of the injuſtice of his former ſuſpicions, and the moment ſhe believed ſuch ſuſpicions were abandoned, ſhe ſincerely forgave them; ſhe conceived that he really was well ſatisfied that ſhe ſhould entertain and manifeſt towards Henry, that couſinly regard which ſhe had never diſavowed, but which, on the contrary, ſhe had always declared ſhe ſhould carry to her grave. On the ſtricteſt examination of her heart, ſhe diſcovered nothing in her ſentiments for Henry that ſhe could wiſh to conceal; and when ſhe beheld, as ſhe believed, Sir William relieved from every jealous doubt, ſhe had on this ſubject nothing farther to wiſh. Henry too appeared

to

to have recovered his natural tone of mind, and Ellen ſecretly congratulated herſelf on the accompliſhment of thoſe hopes which had cheered the darkeſt gloom of her former ſorrows.

Ellen's temper was ſanguine—there were moments in which ſhe could have believed any thing as certain, that it was poſſible the united efforts of virtue and good ſenſe could produce.

"Now," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "I ſee Henry happy; Sir William will in time be all I wiſh him; his love for me will be rational as it is tender; he will deſerve and I will give him my whole heart; after all my ſorrows, and all my apprehenſions, there will not be a happier lot than the one I have drawn."

It depended wholly on Sir William to have realized this picture of happineſs; he choſe to convert it into ſcenes of the moſt genuine wretchedneſs.

The delight with which ſuch thoughts often filled the mind of Ellen, as ſhe ſat converſing with Sir William and Henry, frequently ſpread an ineffable air of ſatisfaction and tenderneſs over her features. Henry at theſe moments beheld her as the image of virtue itſelf; and Sir William regarded her as the moſt abandoned of her ſex—"The time will come," thought he, "the time will come!"—and in this thought he was able to repreſs the reſentment which ſwelled his heart almoſt to breaking.

The

The taſk, however, of diſſimulation, at length became too painful, and he longed to begin the period of puniſhment and vengeance. Ellen was to lye-in in town, and to town for this purpoſe ſhe removed about the beginning of February.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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30
MAY
72